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NOHANT IN 1874.

Frontispiece.

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It seems a charming natural accompaniment to George Sand's books and letters to be reading them to the setting of the very scenes she describes, to the pleasant echo of the friendly French voices. We find a gentle, merry people here at our country restaurant, spending their Sundays under the trees—not wanting anything but a little sunshine to quicken them into gaiety. The inn stands between the forest and the river. Birds and insects are flying, winds stir the leaves, fishes leap from the water, the great stream flows past carrying its rafts, its steady cargo. People sit in the shade watching the currents as they run towards the bridge, and past the woodyard where the children are at play. On the opposite banks are wide green meadows sprinkled with old farms and ancient dovecotes and clumps of tall trees.

Our hostel is at the entrance of the great forest of Fontainebleau and stands at the gates of that vast cathedral with its cloisters and columns of Ionic beeches and Doric pines, and its choir of sweet birds still singing; the incense rises from a thousand aromas, and there is a mosaic under foot of dry leaves and fragrant cones and twigs and fine grass. All sorts of people stop at the welcoming courtyard of the little restaurant—workmen, country

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people, and smart people from the town. Various attractive notices are painted up upon the walls of the old house, 'Friture,' 'Matelottes,' and so forth. Soldiers come—babies arrive by omnibus with a nurse in charge—parents follow, exhausted from long expeditions on bicycles. They embrace their children and call for lemonade. These are inhabitants of Fontainebleau, for the most part, or officers with their wives from the great military academy there. Then some soldiers come up; they arrive in a boat, rowing atrociously and roaring with laughter; as they land they salute their domestic commanding officers and pass on to the outer kitchen of the inn, where a sort of second table is spread.

Louise and Marie, who wait upon thirty people at once, fly hither and thither with flying white streamers, and then perhaps comes his honour the host from the house, followed by his man in shirt-sleeves, carrying innumerable bottles of white wine and red wine of the best, for the guests. These one and another having ended their meal stroll away, couples are to be seen in the distance crossing the bridge or wandering off into the forest glades; the children and nurses, after throwing many stones into the water, depart with the last seven o'clock omnibus; the people who still remain sit peacefully enjoying the evening and watching the sunset. There is one young soldier with a pretty tenor voice who sings to his companions over the lemonade and absinthe bottles, long interminable ditties which last on from daylight into twilight; we ourselves dine, we go for a drive, we return, the voice is singing still, and the praises of 'charmante Gabrielle' are still flowing on.

Late in the evening, when ease has come to the stress of heat, when some stars have risen, dusky forms are still in front of the inn, looking like shadows among the trees of 'la Terrace,' as they call the little gravelled plantation where we have been dining, and where the acacias and chairs and tables grow alternately. Three men in the road are playing a game in the deepening twilight. They can hardly see, but they go on by starlight, exclaiming, measuring their distances, and crouching over their points; an old woman comes down the steps from the lighted kitchen. 'Eh, la mère Simonne, où allez-vous?' the gamblers cry hospitably. Then 'la mère Simonne' stands by, also absorbed in the fortunes of the game. Darkness has fallen on the day and on the hills beyond the river where one or two lights

are scattered. I, who had been reading my book, might have imagined George Sand at work writing through the night by one of these faint lights, for I read of one special time when she came to Fontainebleau alone with her son, as a boy. All day long they wandered in the woods collecting his favourite insects and beetles and plants; half the night she sat while he slept, writing romantic novels to earn the money to pay for their little journey.

I.

My little dissertation concerns the book I read at Fontainebleau rather than Fontainebleau itself, the history of the mistress of Nohant in 1874. She was an old woman then, and the disastrous storm of middle-life had swept out of her sky. No one has ever written so delightfully of old age as George Sand has done herself.

The art of getting old is, I think, specially understood in France; but with her it was something more; it was a ripening and changing, a progress to the very last. It is an ease to one's mind to read of George Sand, in her later days, in her Berrichon home, to read her noble correspondence, and the story of Nohant and of its inhabitants, of the cheerful and talkative guests who arrive to share its hospitalities; the neighbours from La Châtre, the great people from Paris—the great musicians, the men of letters, the men of newspapers. As one reads, all the visionary company seems to surround one. One can almost hear the eager voices, the strains of music (and *what* music!); one can almost breathe the whiffs of the cigarettes from the garden as well as the fragrant scent of the pine leaves, and hear the deep tones of the châtelaine as she converses with her somewhat noisy visitors.¹ Her son Maurice, the naturalist, is a charming figure as he comes strolling in—he also must have had a deep voice like his mother.

All the roads in the province seem to have led to Nohant, to judge by the company it kept. One of them passes by an old inn where all night long, as I have heard, the carts go rumbling by to the neighbouring market, and where the memory of the lady of Nohant is green. Two travellers who spent the night there not long ago can tell of the cheerful legends which are still so vivid in remembrance that they seem to belong to to-day—of the champagne and pasties sent for in haste from the Château,

¹ There is a wonderful description in her 'Impressions' of Liszt playing, and the friends talking and listening without in the garden.

to entertain the unexpected guests; and how when Alexandre Dumas and Prince Napoleon were coming Madame Sand always summoned the hairdresser to dress her hair—never at other times; best of all, there is still the grateful memory of her unending helpful kindness and beneficence to all the people round.

This little book of memoirs which I have lately come across, 'George Sand,' by Henri Amic, gives a sketch of the great writer in her home. Nohant is a household word to many of us, but it comes before us still more clearly in M. Amic's pages. We can see the long white road leading from La Châtre; the villagers are at their cottage doors as he drives up to the gates of the country-house, those gates which open hospitably. As one puts the volume aside it is more like remembering a little journey one has taken, rather than a book one has read. Henri Amic, as a very young man, in 1875, wrote a letter to George Sand; she answered with kindness inviting him to her country-house, and the grateful visitor's remembrance of it all resulted in this charming sketch of her in her old age.

We are not all made in a lofty mould; for many of us these small details and note-books, this young man's treasured collection of affectionate remembrance, will give a more definite impression of the latter days of George Sand's life than many a more important treatise, upon the influence of the romantic school, upon hereditary genius, upon impressionability, &c., &c.

In this illustrated pamphlet (it is scarcely more) Madame Sand is made to talk; her sayings are recalled, she sits familiarly with her parasol under the big cedar-tree, with the pleasant old country-house beyond; we have the illustrations to look at as well as the printed matter; there are the shutters, there is the terrace, the *perron*, the doors and windows wide open to the careless ordered garden. One seems to be at home in the shade of the great trees growing in the pathway. These French country-houses and homesteads are different from English homes; with us places are apt to turn sad and mouldy when they are not trim and well-kept; French country-houses may be safely left to their own devices.¹ The lawns may be uneven, the beds may be choked

¹ Here is one of George Sand's descriptions from her window. 'When I awoke at five this morning,' she says, 'the garden was still asleep, awakening from dreams but silent in the early mist and not yet scenting the air. The sky was awake, palest incandescent lights were vibrating, a slender crescent moon with silver line hung before the golden gates of the morning. . . .'

with tangled growth, nasturtium and marguerite and dahlia straggling wildly, but there is none of the desolate sadness which often lurks among our tangles. In the golden foreign light the happy glory of the land and the sky reign triumphant, quite independent of the gardener's art.

II.

Coming along in his country carriage M. Henri Amic had talked to the people by the way. 'C'est la bonté même, la bonté du bon Dieu, quoi,' says one woman, a country-woman in a Berrichon cap, speaking of 'not' Dame,' as she calls Madame Sand. 'Des Femmes comme ça—le moule en est brisé, on n'en fait plus,' she says. Henri Amic notes it all down along with his first sight of the house among the elms and walnut-trees, and the charming welcome he receives. He is let in by a maid in her peasant's dress, who takes him through the dining-room into the drawing-room, and almost immediately he describes hearing the vibrating tones of a voice outside, and the door opens to let in the two little girls and their grandmother. The young man is received at once as a friend; taken out into the garden, while Madame Sand talks to him in that eloquent voice, leading the way under the great cedar in front of the house and along the avenue of apple-trees, where the '*fleurs vivaces*,' as he calls them, are growing in abundance. Of course Amic has brought a play in manuscript to read to her. Poor Madame Sand, who has her own unique experience of manuscript,¹ suggests that he should defer the reading, warns him that writing for the stage is the most difficult of all writing. 'Plays depend on their interpreters,' she says; 'they depend on the public as much as on the author, and the public changes its mind, its impression, its fashion and sympathies.' Then she goes on to talk—and how well she talks. She tells the young man not to be surprised if he does not succeed at first. 'Literature is nothing else than the history of life itself,' she says; 'you are very young to know that history,' she adds. Once she wrote that when she died she hoped to go to some place where there was neither reading nor writing, but this must have been a passing phase—to her reading and writing was feeling, was uttering, was a life within a life.

¹ 'Your MS. is No. 152 in order,' she writes somewhere to some importunate poet,

To return to our traveller. At six o'clock the dinner-bell rings, and the little company sit down to a cheerful meal; one of Madame Sand's old friends, M. Edmond Plauchut is there, the editor of the '*Revue des Deux Mondes*.' 'Each one of us is happy to be present,' says the author, 'and this tranquil gaiety is delightful.'

French habits are not like ours. After dinner we read that they all play at hide-and-seek, &c., and, after the children's bedtime, at four-handed dominoes. When Amic leaves he is full of regret. 'I see it all before me long after I have left,' he writes; 'the dear, big drawing-room with the long piano, the two old armchairs hung with cretonne on either side of the chimney-piece. The great table in the centre with the seat always especially kept for Madame Sand—and there are the walls hung with pictures, Aurora of Koenigsmark and Maurice de Saxe, Dupin de Francueil and Maurice Sand. When I leave all this my gratitude reaches from the dear hosts to the things which surround them.'

It is interesting to be made acquainted with all the people who lived at Nohant in 1875. There is Lina, the devoted daughter-in-law—a daughter of Calamatta, the artist and engraver; there is Maurice Sand, the other master of the house—slow, brilliant, persistent, and affectionate, without great ambition; there are the children Lolo and Titine, who mean so much to their grandmother and to their parents, 'those flowers' of whom she loves to write. Then we read of the old servant, la mère Thomas, '*La Tomate*' as they call her. You are introduced into the old salon with its polished floors and the square of carpet under the big round table, round which the family and the friends sit of an evening. There is George Sand's special place at the table, and the two pianos upon which Liszt and Chopin must have played in turn, and the pictures on the walls in their old-fashioned frames. The old clock still seems to be ticking out of the times of the Louis, of Marie Antoinette, of the Great Terror, of Napoleon and the returning Bourbons. Through all catastrophes Nohant has stood firm, sheltering the descendants of that charming old survivor of monarchic times, Monsieur Dupin de Francueil, at whose death his widow came hither with her only son, who was the first Maurice—the father of George Sand.

So much has been said about Madame Dupin de Francueil, the grandmother, and about her very varied ancestors, Aurora of Koenigsmark, and the marshals and the kings, and the dancing

ladies, George Sand's great-grandmothers, that it is needless to enter into it all once more; but when one thinks of this remarkable woman of our own day ruling her strange court, it is impossible to ignore Marshal Saxe and King Augustus altogether, and the many extraordinary people from whom Aurore Dupin descended. Francueil, her agreeable grandfather, figures in all the memoirs of his time, and he had a servant, a sort of attendant secretary, whose name was Jean Jacques Rousseau, and who writes in his memoirs that he was dismissed from this situation for stealing ribbon. Madame Sand told Henri Amic that she had heard from her grandmother that this was a pure invention of Jean Jacques' own imagining, so Monsieur de Francueil had told his wife.

In the beginning of Karénines' book about George Sand there is a charming frontispiece of Aurore Dupin as a child, from a pastel done at the time. It is the portrait of an irresistible little girl, with dark eyes, thoughtful looks; simple, wondering, wise, no wonder that child grew to be a genius, with such charming signs of the future already marked upon her baby face.

Amic gives a picture of George Sand in early middle life. It is signed Calamatta, and dated 1840. This is certainly also a very striking portrait. It represents a force rather than a woman, and gives the impression of a fantastic person, as people are indeed when they have been set aloof and apart from the rest of the world. George Sand wears a loose dress with big sleeves, like a nun's, an odd head-dress of falling ribbons fastened round her head—it was a fashion of the time—a kerchief is crossed upon her breast, she has a ring upon her forefinger, like one of Holbein's ladies. She is looking beyond you. Oddly enough, something of this reserve, this suggestion of immunity from life's commonplace, has now and again struck me in some of Madame Sand's old acquaintances, in people who belonged to her influence rather than to her companionship. They had and have a conviction, a certain poignant style, every word and look suggested a fact, and not an epigram only as with people now.

III.

The only time the writer ever saw Madame Sand she gave her the impression of a sort of sphinx in a black silk dress. Her black hair shone dully in the light as she sat motionless, a dark face, a dark figure in the front of a theatre box. Two men were sitting

behind her—I remember the cold, unemotional, almost reluctant salutation she gave in return to my friend's gracious and animated greeting. This was my only sight of that woman of genius, of that multitude of women whose acquaintance I only seem to be making to-day.

Many people have said that Consuelo was drawn from Mrs. Sartoris; others have christened Madame Pauline Viardot Consuelo. I once asked this latter old friend about George Sand. 'Everything has been already said,' she answered, 'Tout a été dit; mais ce que l'on ne dira jamais assez, c'est combien elle était bonne. Elle était bonne, bonne, bonne.' This Consuelo went on to say that she had only known George Sand in her later life, when she was wise and beneficent, and then it was she had rendered her one great and special service for which she should ever be grateful. Madame Sand had been the person to suggest and bring about her happy marriage.

On one occasion—so Mrs. Kemble used to tell us—Mrs. Sartoris called on George Sand. Mrs. Kemble asked her sister with some interest what had happened, what Madame Sand had said and what she was like. The younger sister laughed. 'She was very vehement, very dictatorial, very contradictory; in short, very like yourself, Fanny.' But this can only have been a joke and meant as a joke, for the two women were of different elements and worlds apart. Mrs. Kemble had humour, George Sand was absolutely without humour. Would that that saving grace had been there to rescue her from the exuberances of romance. Balzac's description of her, after one of the great earthquakes of her life, alone in a big room at Nohant, with pretty yellow slippers, smart stockings, red pantaloons and a double chin, sitting smoking in a big chair, gives one an impression of some deadly dull Bohemia which is odd and jarring. 'She has been a year at Nohant alone, and very sad,' he writes. 'She is working enormously, she leads something the life I lead,' says Balzac; 'she goes to bed at six in the morning and rises at midday—I go to bed at six and rise at midnight. Then we sit talking through the night, taking the position to which each feels entitled. "Je causais avec un camarade,"' he says, "'elle a de hautes vertus, de ces vertus que la société prend au rebours.'" We discussed everything seriously, with good faith, with the candour and the conscience worthy of *great shepherds who are leading flocks of men*. [This seems to have been their genuine conviction.] . . . She is an excellent mother; she is

adored by her children, but she dresses her daughter Solange as a little boy, which is not well. She smokes unceasingly; she has been the dupe of others, she is of those who are powerful at home and in personal influence and understanding, and yet who are doomed to be taken in again and again. I am convinced that she drew her own self in the *Princesse* in the "*Secrétaire Intime*." She knows and she says of herself that which I have always thought without telling her, that she has neither strength of conception nor the gift of construction, neither unerring truth nor pathos; but that, without knowing the French language, she has style. She takes—as I do—celebrity as a joke, and she despises the public, whom she calls "*jumento!*"

After his visit to Nohant, Balzac's relations became more and more friendly with George Sand; an interesting correspondence followed, each writer acknowledging the merit of the other. When Balzac died, George Sand wrote a special notice, which was published as a preface to his completed works in 1855.

IV.

Henri Amic was the friend of a quarter of a century later, when all the mad storms and reckless, desperate delusions were over. He was fortunate, and came in for the calm end of the long, generous, ugly woven drama of her life. He not only went to Nohant, he used often to call upon Madame Sand at her apartment in Paris. She liked the farther shores of the Seine, where she always lived when in Paris—the Quai Voltaire, the garden of the Luxembourg—no wonder those ancient quarters attracted her; they always seem to be the real Paris, where its real heart beats; the new boulevards and the Bois de Boulogne are but suburbs, overflowings from the old city. When we, too, made a pilgrimage to George Sand's old home we drove up the street of the little stream, the Rue du Bac, with the fanciful shops on either side: the old book-shops and print-shops, the marts for ancient furniture, those strange warehouses where saints are sold in pairs, and angels by the half-dozen with golden wings, and holy families almost life-size, all carved and painted pink and blue, with coronets of gold and red—we passed the old walls of enclosed courtyards, over which the green lilac-trees and ivies come thrusting; the archways of fine old mansions, many of which still retain their ancient state, others are convents now—

museums—schools of art and learning. Then we come to the great theatre of the Odéon, where so many of George Sand's plays were acted, and past the café where she used to dine, and so we reach a somewhat imposing-looking doorway, 5 Rue Gay-Lussac, the last house where she used to stay when she was in Paris. We read that in later times she would be so tired by her short visits to Paris, and her work and her talk, that she sometimes fell asleep for thirty hours at a time. We asked leave to see her rooms, which were on the first floor, but were told that this was not possible. 'But,' said the concierge, 'there is a lady who lives just underneath, and her apartment is identical; I think she would let you look in if you wished it.' The lady agreed, and we passed into the inner courtyard, and mounted a few steps and were admitted then and there. First came a narrow passage with a kitchen looking to the court, then a couple of fair-sized rooms each with two tall shuttered windows to the street. The first was a bedroom, but the owner, an admirer of George Sand, made me enter the inner room, which seemed absolutely dark at first, until she had flung open the tall shutters. Then I saw a long-shaped, rather lofty room looking to the open place; an *étagère*, a small inlaid table, and a huge stuffed sofa covered with leather.

'This was George Sand's sofa,' said the lady solemnly. 'Sit upon it, if you like; she used to fling herself down to rest upon this couch for an hour in the night when she was at work; all night long she used to drink coffee to keep herself awake. Alexandre Dumas fils has sat upon this seat,' the lady continued, 'so has Dumas père. My husband was alive when George Sand died, and he bought it from Monsieur Maurice Sand, who would part with nothing else. We introduced it through the window, it was too large to pass the doorway.' The sacred sofa was certainly the biggest couch I ever saw, with a corner to it and leather buttons all along.

M. Amic tells us that he was shown a correspondence written long years before, belonging to the early stormy days, when Mme. Dudevant had just left her husband and was vainly trying to find a means to live; she had thought of writing, but she feared rebuff; she had been trying to paint upon wood, but was obliged to give it up. 'What interests me above all in these letters,' says Amic, 'is to find the Madame Sand I know, in harmony in every point with her past self. She seems to me, then as now, gay, devoted, very simple, very modest, and, above all, maternal and

good.' 'It makes me happy,' he repeats, 'to find her always so completely in harmony with what I know her to be.'

No wonder the young man is grateful; the letters which the elder woman writes to him are admirable and touching in their justness and interest, no less when they discourage than when they would encourage. She urges him to keep to his profession, to put off literary aspirations; every word is straight and wise. 'Read a great deal without ceasing to write, vary your studies so as to renew your intelligence, this is a necessity for every human being who writes; observe, think, write down what you yourself have felt, not what you imagine others to be feeling. Feed your head and your heart also.' '*Laissez dormir votre idée*,' she says, '*vous la réveillerez plus tard*'—it is a pity to spoil the saying by translation—'You write easily, your style is pure, you are well endowed, but this is not enough; before you think of producing you must inform yourself and work hard and constantly; "*piocher ferme*,"' she says.

V.

It was but a very little time before her death that she wrote another letter addressed to the author of the history from which I have been quoting. He is impatient and tired of his work, he wants to give up the Bar and take to literature; she reproaches him and urges him to keep to his vocation. 'I have thought of your discouragement—I have thought of it, and I do not sympathise. It is not possible that you are lazy, for you have intelligence and a heart. Laziness is the infirmity of a poor spirit, and your soul is large; you do not fear the dry aridity of the beginnings of things.' Then, speaking of his desire to give up his legal studies, 'It is the history of civilised man upon earth that you disdain to learn; how can you think you can become a good writer by ignoring all this and suppressing the very reason of your being? How often I have told you that my ignorance was one of the sorrows of my life as a writer! Here is a closed door for me, opening wide for you, and you refuse to enter: you who have youth, facility, memory, *time*—above all, *time*—spoilt child that you are. You complain of the life you lead; you are distracted because you choose to be distracted; when one wishes to shut oneself up, one shuts oneself up; when one would work, one works in the midst of noise; one accustoms oneself to it as one accustoms oneself to sleep in the midst of the rolling of carriages.'

'Dear child, have I pained you?' she asks in a second letter. 'I am all sad when I think of it, but I speak as if I had brought you into the world. I have said harder things to Maurice when he suffered from the languors and irresolutions of your age. To write, you must have lived and sought—you must have digested much, loved, suffered, waited, working always, "*piochant toujours*." You do not want to be like those urchins of literature who think no end of themselves because they print platitudes and absurdities; fly from these men like the pest. No, believe me, art is sacred, a cup that we can only drink after prayer and fasting. Put it aside if you cannot carry on together the study of the foundations of things and the first efforts of imagination; you will return only stronger and in better mood when you have stood your trial by will, by persistence, by the vanquishing of disgust, by the sacrifice of leisure and amusement.'

Is not this a fine letter from a worker of seventy years who has laboured all her life, to a boy scarce over twenty, starting on his way? It is too long to quote at full length, but every sentence rings like a bell calling to work or to prayer.

George Sand's relations with Flaubert, her '*vieux Troubadour*,' as she names him, are also specially delightful and touching; the motherly instinct by which she tries to dispel the gloom which settled upon his morbid, generous spirit; the charming way she writes, laughs, encourages, all these make one realise what this woman must have been for those friends who depended on her.

'You mustn't be ill, you mustn't be cross, my old Troubadour,' she writes in 1872; 'you must cough and get well, and say that France is mad, humanity stupid, and that we are not well-finished animals; only we must love each other all the same, oneself, one's fellow-creatures, above all, one's friends. I have sad hours, but I look at my flowers, those two children who are always smiling; their charming mother, my good, hardworking son whom the end of the world would still find searching, classifying, following out each day's task, and, when he takes a rare hour's rest, gay as Polichinelle himself. I should like to see you less irritated, less occupied with the foolishness of others; to me it seems all waste of time, like complaining of the weather or the flies.'

Sometimes she tries to encourage. 'The eternal thing is the sentiment of the beautiful in a good heart,' she writes; 'both these are yours, you *have not the right* not to be happy. Well,

sad or gay, I love you, and I am always expecting you, but you never speak of coming to see us.'

Elsewhere she lectures him. 'To live in oneself is so bad, the greatest of intellectual pleasures is the possibility of return to oneself after being absent for a long time; but always to inhabit this ego, the most tyrannical, the most exacting, the most fantastic of companions—no, it is not to be done. You shut up an exuberant nature in a dungeon, you make a tender and indulgent heart into a misanthrope.' Then she tells him that they live in bad times, and that to surmount them they must not curse but pity them. In one of her last letters, at sixty-nine, she tells Flaubert that she goes every day to plunge in the cold froth of her little river—it refreshes and restores and fits her for work! She writes to him, ill and in pain, but still full of courage and encouragement. His book has been criticised; she fears the effect upon him. 'It is all the worse for you that you will not be a man of nature and that you give too much importance to human things. We *are* nature. We live in nature, by nature, and for nature; talent, wit, genius are natural phenomena like the wind, the stars, the clouds. It is not of criticism that man should ask what he has done, what he wants to do. Criticism knows nothing, its business is to chatter; nature alone can speak to the intelligence an imperishable language.

'I can write no more, I must tell you I love you. Send news of yourself.'

Memorial fêtes have lately been held to George Sand's memory, but her collected letters are the best monument and tribute to her life, as we read in them the constant unselfish thoughts and doings: of her liberal and splendid gifts, of the pains she took, the readiness of mind, the courage to meet troubles, which she realised more for others than for herself. How many during the great war had she not rescued from death, from exile, from sickness, from prison; she who had judged so madly, who had been so blind for herself, was wise and far-seeing for others. Again and again she had given help and courage and advice, medicines, simples from her garden, the precious balms and ointments of goodwill and sympathy; none had ever been sent empty from her door.

When the time came for her to cease her long life's work she was carried to the grave by her children, by her friends, by the

sobbing villagers. Victor Hugo telegraphed an oration like a volley of musketry over her grave. Flaubert wept for her—he who had known her faithful kindness for years past; so did the humble people who trusted her ever and turned to her with undoubting hearts.

Few people have a better right to speak kindly of old age than George Sand. If ever there was a case of ‘hang thou my fruit upon the tree,’ it was hers. She ripened to the last. Her outlook grew wise as time passed over her head; those wonderful eyes of hers never lost their brightness, but they looked up and around instead of downwards. How sound and to be trusted was her judgment when it was no longer overthrown by the gust of egotistic passion! Her last letters to Flaubert are beautiful among letters, encouraging him, criticising his work, and, what is far more rare, pointing out not only what is wrong but what may be made right in his books. They are as beautiful in style as any letters she ever wrote in her youth; her heart is in them as much as her genius. The letters to the young disciple, panting after success, are full of a motherly, grandmotherly warning of charity and understanding, and contain the interest which belongs to all sincere feeling, as well as the harmony of that which has endured. It is almost always good reading when the people who write are interested in one another and in what they are saying. As people get older the joy of life is no longer able to carry them along oblivious of everything but their own being and emotion, but the feeling is there, only in a new shape; it is no longer a distinct note sounding clearly, it is a chord that strikes, an accompaniment that harmonises the crudities.

For George Sand to the end of her life discretion is non-existent, its place is occupied by a sort of benevolent self-sufficiency, a genius of expression. She is an improvisatrice, as Henry James justly says. ‘She wrote as a bird, she never studied her expression.’

Renan, writing of George Sand soon after her death, used a fine simile. He spoke of her ‘sonorous soul,’ and he said she was the Eolian harp of her time.

LAYING UP THE BOAT.¹

THERE arrives a day towards the end of October—or with luck we may tide over into November—when the wind in the mainsail suddenly takes a winter force, and we begin to talk of laying up the boat. Hitherto we have kept a silent compact and ignored all change in the season. We have watched the blue afternoons shortening, fading through lilac into grey, and let pass their scarcely perceptible warnings. One afternoon a few kittiwakes appeared. A week later the swallows fell to stringing themselves like beads along the coastguard's telephone-wire on the hill. They vanished, and we pretended not to miss them. When our hands grew chill with steering we rubbed them by stealth or stuck them nonchalantly in our pockets. But this vicious unmistakable winter gust breaks the spell. We take one look around the harbour, at the desolate buoys awash and tossing; we cast another seaward at the thick weather through which, in a week at latest, will come looming the earliest of the Baltic merchantmen, our November visitors—bluff vessels with red-painted channels, green deckhouses, white top-strakes, wooden davits overhanging astern, and the Danish flag fluttering aloft in the haze. Then we find speech; and with us, as with the swallows, the move into winter quarters is not long delayed when once it comes into discussion. We have dissembled too long; and know, as we go through the form of debating it, that our date must be the next spring-tides.

This ritual of laying up the boat is our way of bidding farewell to summer; and we go through it, when the day comes, in ceremonial silence. *Favete linguis!* The hour helps us, for the spring-tides at this season reach their height a little after night-fall, and it is on an already slackening flood that we cast off our moorings and head up the river with our backs to the waning sunset. Since we tow a dinghy astern and are ourselves towed by the silent yachtsman, you may call it a procession. She has been stripped during the last two days of sails, rigging, and all spars but the mainmast. Now we bring her alongside the town quay and beneath the shears—the abhorred shears—which lift this too out of its step, dislocated with a creak as poignant as the cry of

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Polydorus. We lower it, lay it along the deck, and resume our way; past quay doors and windows where already the townsfolk are beginning to light their lamps; and so by the jetties where foreign crews rest with elbows on bulwarks and stare down upon us idly through the dusk. She is after all but a little cutter of six tons, and we might well apologise, like the Athenian, for so diminutive a corpse. But she is our own; and they never saw her with jackyarder spread, or spinnaker, or jib-topsail delicate as samite—those heavenly wings!—nor felt her gallant spirit straining to beat her own record before a tense northerly breeze. Yet even to them her form, in pure white with gilt fillet, might tell of no common obsequies.

For in every good ship the miracle of Galatea is renewed; and the shipwright who sent this keel down the ways to her element surely beheld the birth of a goddess. He still speaks of her with pride, but the conditions of his work keep him a modest man; for he goes about it under the concentrated gaze of half a dozen old mariners hauled ashore, who haunt his yard uninvited, slow of speech but deadly critical. Nor has the language a word for their appalling candour. Often, admiring how cheerfully he tolerates them, I have wondered what it would feel like to compose a novel under the eyes of half a dozen reviewers. But to him, as to his critics, the ship was a framework only until the terrible moment when with baptism she took life. Did he in the rapture, the brief ecstasy of creation, realise that she had passed from him? Ere the local artillery band had finished *Rule Britannia*, and while his friends were still shaking his hands and drinking to him, did he know his loss in his triumph? His fate is to improve the world, not to possess; to chase perfection knowing that under the final mastering touch it must slip from his hand; to lose his works and anchor himself upon the workmanship, the immaterial function. For of art this is the cross and crown in one; and he, modest man, was born to the sad eminence.

She is ours now by purchase, but ours, too, by something better. Like a slave's her beautiful untaught body came to us; but it was we who gave wings to her, and with wings a soul, and a law to its grace, and discipline to its vital impulses. She is ours, too, by our gratitude, since the delicate machine

Has like a woman given up its joy;

and by memories of her helpfulness in such modest perils as we

tempt, of her sweet companionship through long days empty of annoyance—land left behind with its striving crowds, its short views, its idols of the market-place, its sordid worries; the breast flung wide to the horizon, swept by wholesome salt airs, void perhaps, but so beatifically clean! Then it was that we learned her worth, drinking in the knowledge without effort, lulled hour after hour by her whisperings which asked for no answer, by the pulse of her tiller soft against the palm. Patter of reef-points, creak of cordage, hum of wind, hiss of brine—I think at times that she has found a more human language. Who that has ever steered for hours together cannot report of a mysterious voice ‘breaking the silence of the seas,’ as though a friend were standing and speaking astern? or has not turned his head to the confident inexplicable call? The fishermen fable of drowned sailors ‘hailing their names.’ But the voice is of a single speaker; it bears no likeness to the hollow tones of the dead; it calls no name; it utters no particular word. It merely speaks. Sometimes, ashamed at being tricked by an illusion so absurd, I steal a glance at the yachtsman forward. He is smoking, placidly staring at the clouds. Patently he was not the speaker, and patently he has heard nothing. Was it Cynthia, my dearer ship-mate? She, too, knows the voice; even answered it one day, supposing it mine, and in her confusion I surprised our common secret. But we never hear it together. She is seated now on the lee side of the cockpit, her hands folded on the coaming, her chin rested on them, and her eyes gazing out beneath the sail and across the sea from which they surely have drawn their wine-coloured glooms. She has not stirred for many minutes. No, it was not Cynthia. Then either it must be the wild, obedient spirit who carries us, straining at the impassable bar of speech, to break through and be at one with her master, or else—can it have been Ariel, perched aloft in the shrouds, with mischievous harp?

That was the chirp of Ariel
You heard, as overhead it flew,
The farther going more to dwell
And wing our green to wed our blue;
But whether note of joy or knell
Not his own Father-singer knew;
Nor yet can any mortal tell,
Save only how it shivers through;
The breast of us a sounded shell,
The blood of us a lighted dew.

Perhaps, but for my part I believe it was the ship; and if you deride my belief I shall guess you one of those who need a figure-head to remind them of a vessel's sex. There are minds which find a certain romance in figure-heads. To me they seem a frigid, unintelligent device, not to say idolatrous. I have known a crew to set so much store by one that they kept a tinsel locket and pair of earrings in the fore-castle and duly adorned their darling when in port. But this is materialism. The true personality of a ship resides in no prefiguring lump of wood with a sightless smile to which all seas come alike and all weathers. Lay your open palm on the mast, rather, and feel life pulsing beneath it, trembling through and along every nerve of her. Are you converted? That life is yours to control. Take the tiller, then, and for an hour be a god. For indeed you shall be a god, and of the very earliest. The centuries shall run out with the chain as you slip moorings—run out and drop from you plumb, and leave you free, winged! Or if you cannot forget in a moment the times to which you were born, each wave shall turn back a page as it rolls past to break on the shore towards which you revert no glance. Even the romance of it shall fade with the murmur of that coast.

Sails of silk and ropes of sendal,
Such as gleam in ancient lore,
And the singing of the sailor,
And the answer from the shore—

these shall pass and leave you younger than romance—a child open-eyed and curious, pleased to meet a sea-parrot or a rolling porpoise, or to watch the gannets diving—

As Noah saw them dive
O'er sunken Ararat.

And sunset shall bring you, a god, to the gates of a kingdom I must pause to describe for you, though when you reach it you will forget my description and imagine yourself its first discoverer. But that is a part of its charm.

Walter Pater, reading the 'Odyssey,' was brought up (as we say) 'with a round turn' by a passage wherein Homer describes briefly and with accuracy how some mariners came to harbour, took down sail, and stepped ashore. It filled him with wonder that so simple an incident—not to say ordinary—could be made so poetical; and, having pondered it, he divided

the credit between the poet and his fortunate age—a time (said he) in which one could hardly have spoken at all without ideal effect, or the sailors pulled down their boat without making a picture 'in the great style' against a sky charged with marvels.

You will discover, when you reach the river-mouth of which I am telling, and are swept over the rolling bar into quiet water—you will discover (and with ease, being a god) that Mr. Pater was entirely mistaken, and the credit belongs neither to Homer nor to his fortunate age. For here are woods with woodlanders, and fields with ploughmen, and beaches with fishermen hauling nets; and all these men, as they go about their work, contrive to make pictures 'in the great style' against a sky charged with marvels, obviously without any assistance from Homer, and quite as if nothing had happened for, say, the last three thousand years. That the immemorial craft of seafaring has no specially 'heroic age'—or that, if it have, that age is yours—you will discover by watching your own yachtsman as he moves about lowering fore-sail and preparing to drop anchor.

It is a river of gradual golden sunsets, such as Wilson painted—a broad-bosomed flood between deep and tranquil woods, the main banks holding here and there a village as in an arm maternally crook'd, but opening into creeks where the oaks dip their branches in the high tides, where the stars are glassed all night long without a ripple, and where you may spend whole days with no company but herons and sandpipers. Even by the main river each separate figure—the fisherman on the shore, the ploughman on the upland, the ferryman crossing between them—moves slowly upon a large landscape, while, permeating all, 'the essential silence cheers and blesses.' After a week at anchor in the heart of this silence Cynthia and I compared notes, and set down the total population at fifty souls; and even so she would have it that I had included the owls. Lo! the next morning an unaccustomed rocking awoke us in our berths, and, raising the flap of our dew-drenched awning, we 'descried at sunrise an emerging prow' of a peculiarly hideous excursion steamboat. She blew no whistle, and we were preparing to laugh at her grotesque temerity when we became aware of a score of boats putting out towards her from the shadowy banks. Like spectres they approached, reached her, and discharged their complements, until at last a hundred and fifty passengers crowded her deck. In silence—or in such silence as a paddle-boat can achieve—she

backed, turned, and bore them away: on what festal errand we never discovered. We never saw them return. For aught I know they may never have returned. They raised no cheer; no band accompanied them; they passed without even the faint hum of conversation. In five minutes at most the apparition had vanished around the river-bend seawards and out of sight. We stared at the gently heaving water, turned, and caught sight of Euergetes, his head and red cap above the forecastle hatch. (I call our yachtsman Euergetes because it is so unlike his real name that neither he nor his family will recognise it.) 'Why, Euergetes,' exclaimed Cynthia, 'wherever did they all come from?' 'I'm sure I can't tell you, ma'am,' he answered, 'unless 'twas from the woods'—giving us to picture these ardent holiday-makers roosting all night in the trees while we slumbered. But the odd thing was that the labourers manned the fields that day, the fishermen the beach that evening, in undiminished numbers. We landed, and could detect no depletion in the village. We landed on subsequent days, and discovered no increase. And the inference, though easy, was startling.

I suppose that 'in the great style' could hardly be predicated of our housekeeping on these excursions; and yet it achieves, in our enthusiastic opinion, a primitive elegance not often recaptured by mortals since the passing of the Golden Age. We cook for ourselves, but bring a fine spirit of emulation both to *cuisine* and service. We dine frugally, but the claret is sound. From the moment when Euergetes awakes us by washing down the deck, and the sound of water rushing through the scuppers calls me forth to discuss the weather with him, method rules the early hours, that we may be free to use the later as we list. First the cockpit beneath the awning must be prepared as a dressing-room for Cynthia; next Euergetes summoned on deck to valet me with the simple bucket. And when I am dressed and tingling from the *douche*, and sit me down on the cabin top, barefooted and whistling, to clean the boots, and Euergetes has been sent ashore for milk and eggs, bread and clotted cream, there follows a peaceful half-hour until Cynthia flings back a corner of the awning and, emerging, confirms the dawn. Then begins the business, orderly and thorough, of redding up the cabin, stowing the beds, washing out the lower deck, folding away the awning, and transforming the cockpit into a breakfast-room, with table neatly set forth. Meanwhile Euergetes has returned, and from

the forecastle comes the sputter of red mullet cooking. Cynthia clatters the cups and saucers, while in the well by the cabin door I perform some acquired tricks with the new-laid eggs. There is plenty to be done on board a small boat, but it is all simple enough. Only, you must not let it overtake you. Woe to you if it fall into arrears!

By ten o'clock or thereabouts we have breakfasted, my pipe is lit, and a free day lies before us—

All the wood to ransack,
All the wave explore.

We take the dinghy and quest after adventures. The nearest railway lies six miles off, and is likely to deposit no one in whom we have the least concern. The woods are deep, we carry our lunch-basket and may roam independent of taverns. If the wind invite, we can hoist our small sail; if not, we can recline and drift and stare at the heavens, or land and bathe, or search in vain for curlews' or kingfishers' nests, or in more energetic moods seek out a fisherman and hire him to shoot his seine. Seventy red mullet have I seen fetched at one haul out of those delectable waters, remote and enchanted as the lake whence the fisherman at the genie's orders drew fish for the young king of the Black Isles. But such days as these require no filling, and why should I teach you how to fill them?

Best hour of all perhaps is that before bed-time, when the awning has been spread once more, and after long hours in the open our world narrows to the circle of the reading-lamp in the cockpit. Our cabin is prepared. Through the open door we see its red curtain warm in the light of the swinging lamp, the beds laid, the white sheets turned back. Still we grudge these moments to sleep. Outside we hear the tide streaming seawards, light airs play beneath the awning, above it rides the host of heaven. And here, gathered into a few square feet, we have home—larder, cellar, library, tables, and cupboards; life's small appliances with the human comradeship they serve, chosen for their service after severely practical discussion, yet ultimately by the heart's true nesting-instinct. We are isolated, bound even to this strange river-bed by a few fathoms of chain only. To-morrow we can lift anchor and spread wing; but we carry home with us.

I will make you brooches and toys for your delight
Of bird-song at morning and star-shine at night;
I will make a palace fit for you and me
Of green days in forests and blue days at sea.

I will make my kitchen and you shall keep your room
 Where white flows the river and bright blows the broom;
 And you shall wash your linen and keep your body white
 In rainfall at morning and dewfall at night.

You see now what memories we lay up with the boat. Will you think it ridiculous that after such royal days of summer, her inconspicuous obsequies have before now put me in mind of Turner's 'Fighting *Téméraire*'? I declare, at any rate, that the fault lies not with me, but with our country's painters and poets for providing no work of art nearer to my mood. We English have a great sea-faring and a great poetical past. Yet the magic of the sea and shipping has rarely touched our poetry, and for its finest expression we must still turn to an art in which as a race we are less expert, and stand before that picture of Turner's in the National Gallery. The late Mr. Froude believed in a good time coming when the sea-captains of Elizabeth are to find their bard and sit enshrined in 'a great English national epic as grand as the *Odyssey*.' It may be, but as yet our poets have achieved but a few sea-fights, marine adventures, and occasional pieces, which wear a spirited but accidental look, and suggest the excursionist. On me, at any rate, no poem in our language—not even *The Ancient Mariner*—binds as that picture binds, the

mystic spell,
 Which none but sailors know or feel,
 And none but they can tell—

if indeed they *can* tell. In it Turner seized and rolled together in one triumphant moment the emotional effect of noble shipping and a sentiment as ancient and profound as the sea itself—human regret for transitory human glory. The great war-ship, glimmering in her Mediterranean fighting-paint, moving like a queen to execution; the pert and ignoble tug, itself an emblem of the new order, eager, pushing, ugly, and impatient of the slow loveliness it supersedes; the sunset hour, closing man's labour; the fading river-reach—you may call these things obvious, but all art's greatest effects are obvious when once genius has discovered them. I should know well enough by this time what is coming when I draw near that picture, and yet my heart never fails to leap with the old wild wonder. There are usually one or two men standing before it—I observe that it affects women less—and I glance at them furtively to see how *they* take it. If ever I surprise one with tears in his eyes, I believe we shall shake hands. And why not? For the moment we are not strangers, but men

subdued by the wonder and sadness of our common destiny: 'we feel that we are greater than we know.' We are two Englishmen, in one moment realising the glories of our blood and state. We are alone together, gazing upon a new Pacific, 'silent, upon a peak in Darien.'

For—and here lies his subtlety—in the very flush of amazement the painter flatters you by whispering that for *you* has his full meaning been reserved. The *Téméraire* goes to her doom unattended, twilit, obscure, with no pause in the dingy bustle of the river. You alone have eyes for the passing of greatness, and a heart to feel it.

There's a far bell ringing—

but you alone hear it tolling to evensong, to the close of day, the end of deeds.

So, as we near the beach where she is to lie, a sense of proud exclusiveness mingles with our high regret. Astern the jettymen and stevedores are wrangling over their latest job; trains are shunting, cranes working, trucks discharging their cargoes amid clouds of dust. We and we only assist at the passing of a goddess. Euergetes rests on his oars, the tow-rope slackens, she glides into the deep shadow of the shore, and with a soft grating noise—ah, the eloquence of it!—takes ground. Silently we carry her chain out and noose it about a monster elm; silently we slip the legs under her channels, lift and make fast her stern moorings, lash the tiller for the last time, tie the coverings over cabin-top and well; anxiously, with closed lips, praetermitting no due rite. An hour, perhaps, passes, and November darkness has settled on the river ere we push off our boats, in a last farewell committing her—our treasure 'locked up, not lost'—to a winter over which Jove shall reign genially

Et fratres Helenae, lucida sidera.

As we thread our dim way homeward among the riding-lights flickering on the black water, the last pale vision of her alone and lightless follows and reminds me of the dull winter ahead, the short days, the long nights. She is haunting me yet as I land on the wet slip strewn with dead leaves to the tide's edge. She follows me up the hill, and even to my library door. I throw it open, and lo! a bright fire burning, and, smiling over against the blaze of it, cheerful, companionable, my books have been awaiting me.

A. T. QUILLER-COUCH.

MRS. CARLYLE AND HER HOUSEMAID.¹

SOME few months ago there arrived one afternoon at Carlyle's house in Cheyne Row, Chelsea, a bright, alert, middle-aged, and intelligent Scotswoman. She entered her name in the visitors' book as Mrs. Broadfoot of Thornhill, and went all over the house with keen interest and obvious familiarity, remarking the changes which had taken place in its arrangements, and recalling, as she passed from room to room, the old positions of the furniture and belongings.

Before she left, the mystery of this pleasant familiarity was solved. In a chat with the custodian she informed her that she had been Mrs. Carlyle's housemaid here from July 1865 till the latter's death in April 1866, and had remained in Mr. Carlyle's service till her marriage, four or five months later. Of course she had many interesting and intimate little recollections of her year at No. 5 to recall: memories of the almost incessant illness of Mrs. Carlyle; of many kindnesses from Mr. Carlyle, who had always liked and thought well of her; and of the friends and visitors of the house, amongst whom she remembered Ruskin, Froude, Tyndall, Forster, Darwin, Huxley, Tennyson, the Duke of Argyll, Miss Davenport-Bromley, Dean Stanley, the Marchioness of Lothian, the Countess of Airlie, Geraldine Jewsbury, Mr. Whistler, and others. Rather a notable galaxy for the modest doorstep of a Chelsea 'Row.'

When Mrs. Broadfoot mentioned that she had several letters of Mrs. Carlyle's, written at the time of entering her service, and that she had thought of burning these, our custodian raised her voice in horrified protest; and great, therefore, was her satisfaction when some weeks afterwards a packet containing them arrived from Thornhill, most kindly sent to the house by its quondam 'maid'; who has also been so good as to send me some interesting memories of her time at Cheyne Row.

These letters are naturally not documents of any historic importance. But the bright humour and easy flow of converse which make all that Mrs. Carlyle wrote such delightful reading, are not wanting even here; and many, I think, will rejoice with

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me that, not merely as charming letters, but as the unintentional contribution of a highly gifted woman towards one solution of the great servant problem, they have been happily rescued from the flames which threatened them.

It should be mentioned—if only by way of much-needed example—that the permission of Mr. Alexander Carlyle has been sought and given to the publication of these letters, to which he has kindly contributed a few explanatory notes and details.

A word of explanation should perhaps be added as to the time when this correspondence took place. Carlyle had corrected and returned the final proofs of 'Frederick the Great' in the spring of 1865; and the completion of his great work had left him in a spirit of exhaustion which took the form of a miserable restlessness. In March he had been with his wife to stay with Lady Ashburton in Devonshire, and had returned home 'in depths of stupefaction.' In May he sought fresh change by a visit to his sister, Mrs. Austin, at the Gill, Annandale. Mrs. Carlyle was left alone at No. 5, with a right arm so crippled by neuralgia that she could not write with it; and these letters were very probably written with her left hand, which accounts for the shaky and uncertain penmanship. Though she had to some extent recovered from the terrible illness of the previous year, the sleeplessness which had then almost driven her out of her mind recurred at intervals; while the heart mischief—which Carlyle does not seem to have realised as such—was increasing.

One feels, in transcribing these letters, how much such documents lose in the process. Italics are but a poor substitute for the dashes and underlining which Mrs. Carlyle used so freely; and other little scraps and inklings of an emphatic personality cling about the handwriting, but vanish, of course, in leaden type.

Here is the first:

I.

5 Cheyne Row, Chelsea: May 15th [1865].

DEAR JESSEY,—I have just received from Mrs. Russell the news of your poor mother's death. I am not surprised; she (your Mother) looked so mortally ill when I saw her last August; and the accounts of her from time to time since had left no hope of ultimate recovery, or release from pain in this life.

Good, industrious, brave-hearted Margaret! Her children may well mourn the loss of such a Mother! But even her children could not wish her life prolonged when it had become for herself a constant and terrible torture.

And you have the consolation, your sister and you, of knowing you were kind to your Mother while she was with you, and that you did all you could to sooth the dear Life which it was not God's will to save!

Mrs. Russell tells me you will return to service now your sad duty is paid, and that you would come to London, to *me*, if we can come to an agreement.

That is difficult at this distance. Face to face, we could get to understand each other in a few minutes, but we may write questions and answers thro' the post till we are both tired; and, when all is written, there will still be much to take on trust, on both sides; and *you* will have but a vague idea of the '*Situation*,' and *I*, as vague an idea of your fitness for it.

But I will do my best to be explicit.

First, let me tell you *why* I have turned my thoughts on *you* for a Housemaid, in preference to anyone here, whom I *could* transact with face to face.

It is because you are Margaret Heddlestone's daughter. *She* was known in my family for a capital servant and a well-conducted woman; and I have great faith in *breed*, and as great faith in upbringing. Nor does my connection with you date only as far back as your mother and uncle. Your grandfather, when a servant to my grandfather, was very good to me when I stayed at Castlehill, a child of eight years old. No wonder I recollect him perfectly; for it was he who first set me on the back of a pony and taught me to ride! There seems, thus, an old-fashioned, hereditary connection between you and myself that *ought* (at least) to make *you* a kinder servant to me, and me a kinder mistress to you than any servant and mistress chosen from among strangers was likely to be.

For the rest; I remember you at Mrs. Russell's,—a *bonnie* young woman who dashed about with great activity; but who made a noise with the fire-irons and skuttle, and doors, and kept me constantly jumping. I daresay you have learned quietness and much else since then! What my Housemaid has to do is just, I suppose, what other Housemaids have to do, where there are only two servants kept. *She* has to do the House work, to answer the door, to wait at table, to be the least bit of a Lady's maid to me, and the least bit of valet to Mr. Carlyle. As the house is of moderate size, and as we have no dinner parties, and as both Mr. C. and myself are *orderly*, the work is certainly not heavy for anyone who understands her business. The washing is all given out; only the servants wash their own clothes—there is a little garden to dry them in. I give my Housemaid twelve pounds a year, and one pound ten for *beer money*, which she may drink or save—as she likes; tea and sugar of course is given.

I do not know what wages you had in Edin' or what number of servants you were along with. But I should not like you to come to me, if you could do better for yourself. Neither should I like you to come if you cannot make yourself happy among strangers, and at the same time have nobody of your own to visit in London. For I dislike a gloomy discontented looking servant quite as much as an inefficient one. There!—till I have your answer to what I have already written, I think this is enough.

It will be time enough to specify the when and how, when I know your mind to be in favour of coming. Take time to consider well.

Give my remembrances to your sister.—Yours truly,

JANE WELSH CARLYLE.

In reply to this, Jessie had evidently written describing the conditions of her previous '*situation*,' stipulating for some little increase of wages, and signifying her willingness to come to an engagement if this were granted.

Mrs. Carlyle replied immediately:

II.

5 Gt. Cheyne Row, Chelsea, Friday [May, 1865].

DEAR JESSIE,—Your letter had been posted after the first post hour; so it was not delivered here till the afternoon, too late for being answered by return of Post. And Sunday being a blank day at the Thornhill post office, this will not reach you till Monday morning.

I am sorry you should be kept so many hours in uncertainty. But it cannot be helped on my part.

Having studied your letter with all the deliberation I could bring to bear on it, I am come to the conclusion that my idea of having you for housemaid was more romantic than discreet. I have no doubt whatever that you would satisfy me as a servant; the stock you come of, Mrs. Russell's recommendation of you my own recollection of your looks—all assures me on that head. But I have every doubt whether *you* would be satisfied with the Place! And your being ever so good a servant would only make the thing more disappointing, if after I had been at the expense of bringing you to London, and had invested a great deal of hope and kind feeling in you; *you* should find the place 'not good enough' for you and too *dull* to be *staid* in.

And, from your account of the last service you were in, I cannot but foresee such would be the case,—the trifle of difference in the wages wouldn't signify. Tho' I have never given more than twelve pounds hitherto, I shouldn't mind increasing the wages if the servant were worth more. But it is the plainness and quietness of a house like ours that after having been 'very happy' in a houseful of servants, where your chief work was *waiting*,—and no friends within reach to enliven your service here;—it is *THAT* which raises a difficulty which I cannot overcome for you,—or for myself.

Do you see what I mean? and agree with me; that it would be too great a risk for *you* to accept a place so inferior to your last in outward respects; and too great a risk for *me*, to bring anyone so far without a tolerable certainty of *keeping* her.—Sincerely yours,

J. CARLYLE.

The gist of the reply to this letter may be gathered from the following extract from a letter of Mrs. Carlyle to her husband, who was then at The Hill, Dumfries:

Last night there had come from Jessie H—— a very nice letter, not accepting my rejection on the score of the 'situation' being 'too dull for her,' but assuring me that she would not 'be the least dull and discontented' and 'altogether' throwing a quite different and rosier colour on the project. I will enclose the letter and you will read it and tell me if you think I was right in being moved thereby to engage her; for that is what I have done this forenoon in the middle of my sorrows of castor oil!

Quinine pills and castor oil were the prescription given to Mrs. Carlyle for the aching arm!

Here is the letter of engagement:

III.

5 Cheyne Row : Wednesday [May 24, 1865].

DEAR JESSIE,—I like your last letter; there is both Sense and Heart in it; and it has made me less apprehensive of the '*Situation*' proving unsuitable to you. In every human relation entered on between two people there is always something to be *risks* on both sides, and something to be put up with; but as far as can be ascertained at this distance, it seems to me the risk to us two in taking one another for Mistress and Servant, is too trifling to be made a final objection; and that neither of us will find the other too *trying* to mortal patience!

So; let it be concluded that you are to come to me; And I will send you a *shilling* (in shape of postage stamps) after the good old Scotch fashion of engagement—unknown in London—but which I have always kept up,—to the surprise and sometimes to the *terror*—of the person receiving it who supposed it might bind her to Heaven knew what,—like the shilling given to enlist a Soldier!

About the *when*;—I am not in any haste,—so you may pay your visits and make them as long as you like. Six weeks hence will be time enough! For our dining-room needs to be painted; and until two visitors, I expect, have come and gone, the painting cannot be set about. And when it *does* get commenced I must fly my own house till the smell is gone!

It will be better that you should find *me* at home when you come—and also that you should find *something to do*!

Mr. Carlyle is in Dumfries at present, and is going to travel about 'all the summer' he says. And while I am here, *alone* and *need* any housemaiding, I can keep my present Housemaid.

If I could only summon courage for the long journey, I would go down to dear Holm Hill for a week or two—and then I might fetch you back with me. But all that is very unsettled as yet. The people here engage servants only by the *month*. A very bad plan, I think, giving opportunity to people to fly asunder in any moment of ill-humour on either side; when, had they been bound together for six months, they would have just had to make the best of it and found their account in *that* in the long run. For everlasting *changing* is not good for the soul of either mistress or maid I am sure!

Our engagement then should be for the term you have been used to—six months. I will pay your journey, in the first instance. But should you take it in your head to try for something new after the *first* six months, I should require you to bear *half* the expense of your journey yourself.

I need to make this stipulation to guard against flightiness! though I don't know—have not the least reason in the world to believe *you* flighty!

I will tell you the particulars of your journey when the time comes; and when I know my own movements better.

I have written in a great hurry, having an appointment at some distance, and in great *pain*, having got something like *toothache* in my *arm*! But I think I have not forgotten anything essential.

I will just add this. If on longer reflection you feel any hesitation about taking the place just give the *shilling* to some poor person and write to me you have done so. I shall not be the least displeased with you.—Yours truly,

JANE W. CARLYLE.

Mrs. Carlyle did, before this her last summer on earth was over, 'summon courage' to visit Scotland once again. In June, after suffering intensely for some weeks, and trying a succession

of ineffectual remedies for her arm, she journeyed northward (passing within a quarter of a mile of her husband at Cummertrees) to Holm Hill, whence, on the 28th, in a letter to him, she writes :

Jessie is in Thornhill awaiting my orders—the most promising looking servant we have had since her mother. I am greatly pleased with her, and so glad I had faith in breed and engaged her. Many were eager to have her. But she was ‘proud to go back to the family!’ ‘The family?’ Where are they?

In the ‘Letters and Memorials’ Carlyle gives a beautiful little account of their meeting at Dumfries, before she went to Nith Bank. This visit to Scotland was not the success, as regards her illness, which she had so hoped it might prove; the left hand, with which she had been learning to write, ‘took to cramp,’ and the housemaid had to be called in as amanuensis. On July 24 she returned to Chelsea, Carlyle travelling with her from Dumfries to Annan; and Jessie, as had been suggested in the last letter, accompanying her. The heat was intense; and as soon as she had finished the rearrangement of the sitting-room, which had been painted and papered, she went, on Miss Bromley’s pressing invitation, for a fortnight’s visit to Folkestone, whence the following letter is dated :

IV.

4 Langhorn Gardens, Folkestone : Saturday [August 19, 1865].

Thanks, dear Jessie, for your note, which might have been *longer*, without fatiguing my attention! and without exhausting your news!

I continue to like my present quarters; and no wonder; for I have *slept* more since I came here, than I have done in any given week throughout the last three years!—have slept actually like a human Being; without needing to have recourse to *Lucifers*, or *porter-jelly*, or *essence of beef*, or any other of those melancholy inventions of Sleeplessness! It is rather mortifying, however, that sleeping so well I don’t feel the least bit *stronger* for it! Twice that I have tried walking, about as far as twice the length of Cheyne Walk, I have had to get myself brought home ignominiously in a Donkey-Cart! And though I dine *twice* every day,—once at two o’clock, under the name of *Luncheon*, and again at half after eight under the name of *Dinner*; I don’t think I eat, putting it altogether, as much as would keep a couple of rabbits, nay—one rabbit, plump and sleek! I miss the oatcakes! and I miss Mrs. Warren’s coffee, oh most dreadfully! And I need excessively to have my hair combed!—tho’ the pain is quite gone out of my arm, it is stiffer, I think, than ever! And then the Housemaid is so ugly!—I can’t bear her to come within a yard of me! So I take an hour to dress *myself* and look untidy after all.

Well, one of the two weeks I gave myself is past and the other will soon be over too; and Heaven grant Mr. Carlyle mayn’t plump down on you in the meanwhile! He was to be back from his visits, on the other side of the Forth, next Tuesday; I mean—back to his brother’s in Annandale—whence he would ‘start homewards,’ he said, ‘in one day or two.’ That sounds as if he might arrive at Cheyne Row about Thursday or Friday. I have written to beg him not to be in such desperate haste exactly at the wrong moment! But to at least stop a day or

two at Alderley Park (where *we* should have stopt but for *the Baby*!) and so reach home in a calm state of mind, instead of driven distracted by the long journey all at one rush.

And then I held out the inducement that *I* should be there after Monday 28th to welcome him.

But—I don't know—man is born to *contradiction*—as the sparks fly upwards. The very persuasion that he should absent himself a few more days may give him an unconscious but irresistible impulse towards home!¹—Anyhow, Mrs. Warren and you will not be found like the foolish virgins with lamps without oil? And besides, you may be sure of his giving you due warning. Have his bedroom all right—and the upstairs room *fit to be seen*, and no other preparations need be made till the hour and day of his coming has been announced to you by himself. I still *hope* he may not come till I myself am home first! But—if he should,—there is one thing that you must attend to, and which you would not think of without being told!—*that cat*!!—I wish she were dead! But *I* can't shorten her days! because—you see—my poor dear wee dog² liked her! Well! there she is—and as long as she attends Mr. C. at his meals (she doesn't care a snuff of tobacco for him at any other times!) so long will Mr. C. continue to give her bits of meat, and dribbles of milk, to the ruination of the carpets and hearth-rugs!—I have over and over again pointed out to him the stains she has made—but he won't believe them *her* doing!—And the dining-room carpet was so old and ugly, that it wasn't worth rows with one's Husband about! Now, however, that nice new cloth must be protected against the Cat-abuse. So what I wish is that you would shut up the creature when Mr. C. has breakfast, or dinner, or tea. And if he remarks on her absence, say it was my express desire. He has no idea what a selfish, immoral, improper beast she is, nor what mischief she does to the carpets.

My bed had better be slept in occasionally. Kind regards to Mrs. Warren.

Yours sincerely,

JANE CARLYLE.

Carlyle did not stop at Alderley on his southward journey, but he 'tarried' in Dumfriesshire till the day which Mrs. Carlyle had fixed for her return home, August 28, on which date they both arrived at Cheyne Row; Mrs. Carlyle first, and her husband at ten o'clock at night. 'Her beautiful figure,' as Carlyle recalled afterwards, 'and presence welcoming me home will never leave my memory more. . . . She was waiting for me the night I returned; she had hurried back from her little visit to Miss Bromley; must and would be here to receive me.'

During the ensuing seven or eight months occasional references to 'Jessie' may be found in Mrs. Carlyle's letters; but

¹ Carlyle's Letters show that he was in no hurry to get home—the reverse rather. Mrs. Carlyle's object is, of course, to give her servants a fright and keep them up to their work.

² This was Nero, 'the little dim white speck of life, of love, fidelity, and feeling' who was the constant companion of Carlyle's night walks, and for ten years his wife's devoted little comrade, till he was run over by a cart in 1860, mercifully put out of pain by Dr. Barnes, and honourably buried at the end of the garden.

these are of little importance, and there is no need to transcribe them here. In reading what she wrote in these days one must always bear in mind the condition of nervous exhaustion to which she was so often reduced by pain and insomnia. 'She was always very cheerful, and had business enough; though I recollect some mornings, one in particular, when the sight of her dear face (haggard from the miseries of the past night) was a kind of shock to me.' So wrote Carlyle in the too keen remorse begotten of his passionate sorrow, and adds, 'We were peaceable and happy comparatively, through autumn and winter; especially she was wonderfully bearing her sleepless nights and thousandfold infirmities.'

But one other mention of Jessie—almost the last in the tragic third volume of the Memorials—may be cited here. It is in a letter from his wife to Carlyle, written the day after his great Rectorial Address at Edinburgh, and describing the receipt of the news of its successful accomplishment:

The telegraph boy gave his double knock. 'There it is,' I said. Jessie rushed up with the telegram. I tore it open, and read, 'From John Tyndall' (Oh God bless John Tyndall in this world and the next!) 'to Mrs. Carlyle.' 'A perfect triumph.' I read it to myself, and then read it aloud to the gaping chorus. And chorus all began to dance and clap their hands. 'Eh, Mrs. Carlyle! Eh, hear to that!' cried Jessie. 'I told you Ma'am; I told you how it would be.' 'I'm so glad, cousin! You'll be all right now, cousin!' twittered Maggie, executing a sort of leap-frog round me. And they went on clapping their hands till there arose among them a sudden cry for brandy! 'Get her some brandy.' For you see the sudden solution of the nervous tension with which I had been holding in my anxieties for days—nay weeks past—threw me into as pretty a little fit of hysterics as you ever saw.

A touching little scene; a sort of prelude, indeed, of the catastrophe which was to befall that household less than three weeks afterwards.

The story of the sudden death of Mrs. Carlyle in her carriage on that fateful afternoon of Saturday, April 21, 1866, as told by Mr. Froude, is in several particulars incomplete, and in others incorrect.¹ It may, therefore, perhaps be well to set down here, pieced

¹ Unfortunately, as those who have read Mr. David Wilson's book on this subject are aware, the same must be said of too many of Mr. Froude's stories. His inaccuracies are astonishing. He describes, for example, in the *Life*, his last farewell interview with Carlyle 'on the 4th of February 1881,' the day before he died; whereas, in fact, he did not see Carlyle alive after Sunday, January 30. The whole story of Carlyle's neglect of his wife and blindness to her illness is essentially untrue, as told in the biography. It is flatly contradicted by Carlyle's own (almost daily) letters to members of the family, in nearly every one of which an accurate bulletin of 'Jane's' health, or want of health, is given.

together as far as may be with Froude's narrative, the recollections of my father, the Rector of Chelsea, and of Jessie, the housemaid of No. 5, who are probably the only two survivors of those who took actual part in the events referred to.

In the morning Mrs. Carlyle had made her arrangements for the party invited that evening to meet the Froudes, had written her letter to Carlyle, and had posted it herself. After lunch the brougham came round to take her for a drive. Dinner—so movable a feast always at the Carlyles'—was to be about four, and the guests were expected later on.

About five o'clock my father met the empty brougham returning from St. George's Hospital to Cheyne Row. Poor old Silvester, the coachman, pulled up on seeing him, and, terribly upset, told him what had happened: the drive first to Mr. Forster's house at Palace Gate; then to the park; Mrs. Carlyle's getting out near Queen's Gate, and giving her little dog a run as far as the Serpentine; and again putting him out near the Victoria Gate, when he was almost run over by a carriage, and his paw slightly hurt; her jumping out almost before he could pull up, lifting the dog into the carriage and getting in herself; then the drive twice round the park, and his growing alarm at receiving no order from her; finally, his appeal to a passing lady, who at once gave her verdict, 'Dead,' which was confirmed by another bystander; and the drive to St. George's Hospital, where the worst was confirmed, and where he had just left his mistress.

His story told, Silvester drove on to Cheyne Row, and my father walked straight to the Froudes in Onslow Gardens. In the *Life* (vol. ii. p. 312) Froude says he was at home all that day, and that a servant sent from Cheyne Row brought the news that something had happened to Mrs. Carlyle—a curious little instance of the inaccurate memory that so often led him astray. He was out when my father called, and saw Mrs. Froude, who was, of course, greatly distressed at the news, and at her husband's absence.

A little later, on his way from Cheyne Row, Silvester, with Jessie on the box of the brougham, again met my father. Jessie writes:

I was going to identify the body. I gave him (Mr. Blunt) a letter I had with me from Mr. Carlyle to Mrs. Carlyle, which had arrived that afternoon from Scotland, after Mrs. Carlyle had gone out for her drive. I remember how annoyed she was she did not get it, as she expected, in the early morning; and Mr. Carlyle

himself was so grieved she had not got it—his last letter to her—then ; for, he said, he had written it that she might have it in the morning. The letter was lying on the lobby table when Silvester came for me ; and I just took it in my hand, as I knew it would say where Mr. Carlyle was, and that information would be wanted. When we met your father I gave it to him, as I thought he would know best what to do with it.

When my father arrived at Cheyne Row he found a situation of sad anxiety. No one knew definitely where Carlyle was. Should they open Carlyle's letter ? And would it be possible to avoid an inquest ? With some hesitation it was decided to open the letter. He remembers that it was dated from Dumfries, and began with the one word 'Dearest.' No more was read ; the letter was replaced and the envelope closed ; telegrams were sent to John Carlyle and Dr. John Brown asking them to break the news as best they could at Dumfries. Carlyle received both telegrams in quick succession about nine o'clock, in his sister's sitting-room. He wrote of their coming :

It had a sort of *stunning* effect upon me. Not for above two days could I estimate the immeasurable depths of it, or the infinite sorrow which had peeled my life all bare, and, in a moment, shattered my poor world to universal ruin.

A little later on, John Forster, to whose house Jessie and Silvester had driven on their way to the hospital, and who had hurried to Cheyne Row, came on to see my father at the rectory. He was in a state of uncontrolled distraction and excitement as to how an inquest, which he knew would be a cruel aggravation of Carlyle's sufferings, but which, from what had been said at the hospital, seemed inevitable, might be avoided. My father agreed that an effort should be made, and any influence brought to bear on the authorities, to obviate this, and Forster went off at once to Dr. Quain, Mrs. Carlyle's physician, and thence to St. George's Hospital, where, armed with the doctor's certificate, he was able to arrange for the removal of the body to Cheyne Row. Jessie, meanwhile, had reached the hospital, where, on a bed in a small room, her mistress lay, in dress and bonnet just as she had been carried from the brougham. At the foot of the bed, waiting content but immovable till it should be her pleasure to go home, sat the poor little dog, who had so nearly been run over in the park, and to lift whom tenderly back into the carriage beside her had been Mrs. Carlyle's last act on earth.

There was to have been quite a considerable party at the house that evening, Mrs. Carlyle having invited Principal Tulloch and

his wife and daughters to meet the Froudes, while Mrs. Oliphant, Mr. and Mrs. Spottiswoode, and two or three others had also been asked. Jessie remembers how on her return from the hospital she found Mrs. Carlyle's address-book, and an effort was made to inform the friends. Mrs. Oliphant arrived early, and she undertook to receive and tell the other guests as they came. Miss Geraldine Jewsbury, who had also been, with Froude, to the hospital, came in later. About midnight or a little after, the body—temporarily encoffined—was brought back from St. George's. Miss Jewsbury, who had lately become an intimate friend of Mrs. Carlyle, was there to receive it. When Jessie and Mrs. Warren, the housekeeper, had laid their mistress reverently at rest upon her bed in the little panelled first-floor room behind her drawing-room, there remained to be carried out one desire, 'a strange, beautiful, sublime, almost terrible little action,' as Carlyle called it, 'silently resolved on and kept silent from all the earth for perhaps twenty-four years.' Here is the account of it which Geraldine Jewsbury wrote :

One time when Mrs. Carlyle was very ill, she had said to Mrs. Warren that when the last had come, she was to go upstairs into the closet of the spare room, and there she would find two wax candles wrapt in paper, and that these were to be lighted and burned. She said that after she came to live in London she wanted to give a party. [It must have been about 1837.] Her mother wished everything to be very nice, and went out and bought candles and confectionery, and set out a table, and lighted the room quite splendidly, and called her to come and see it when all was prepared. She was angry; she said people would say she was extravagant, and would ruin her husband. She took away two of the candles and some of the cakes. Her mother was hurt, and began to weep. She was pained at once at what she had done; she tried to comfort her mother, and was dreadfully sorry. She took the candles and wrapped them up, and put them where they could be easily found. We found them and lighted them.

So was the resolution, formed, 'bright as with heavenly tears,' on her mother's death, carried out. So, while Mrs. Oliphant received the arriving guests downstairs, the brilliant hostess lay dead above, her face, 'calm, majestic, beautiful in death,' illumined by the lights of her first bright party here; and so it was that Carlyle heard, in the beautiful words of the epitaph he afterwards placed upon her grave, of 'the true and ever-loving help-mate suddenly snatched away from him, and the light of his life as if gone out.'

I must be allowed to quote a few extracts from the interesting notes which Jessie has very kindly sent me of her Cheyne Row memories.

Speaking of Carlyle, she says :

I could have lived with him all my days,¹ and it always makes me angry when I read, as I sometimes do, that he was 'bad-tempered' and 'gey ill to get on with.' He was the very reverse in my opinion. I never would have left him when I did, had I not been going to get married. I always remember his parting words to me: 'Jessie, I don't know your intended husband, but if he's as good as you are you will do well. I never have been served as I have been by you, and I will miss you.' I took a great pride in attending on him at all times and studying his wants and wishes. It was ever one of my duties to rush out at once and 'move on' all street-organs or things of that kind. Many a time in the morning, before he rose, I used to fill his pipe (the short clay one he used in his bedroom) for him, and strike the match to light it. I always cut up his tobacco (he used it in flat cakes) and kept his tin box regularly supplied. He always was so grateful for these little services. . . . I must tell you an amusing incident about an American (I do not recollect his name) who called after Mrs. Carlyle's death to see Carlyle. He called frequently, but I had orders to admit no strangers. He was so persistent, however, that at last I went in to Mr. Carlyle and told him how often he had been there and that he 'just wanted to see him.' Carlyle told me to send him in, and when he went in Carlyle just stood up from his desk in the back dining-room, in his long dressing-gown, and met him with: 'Well, here I am! Take a good look at me.' The gentleman was very much taken aback; but he must have pleased Carlyle, for I remember he stayed and talked quite a long time. . . . It may interest you to know what became of the little dog 'Tiny' so closely associated with Mrs. Carlyle's death. It was never brought back to Cheyne Row. Count Reichenbach came to me some time after the funeral, and begged me to ask Mr. Carlyle if he might have 'Tiny.' Probably he had removed him from the hospital. Carlyle's reply was characteristic: 'Tell him to take it, and never let me set eyes on it again!'

Once again, in 1878, Jessie saw Carlyle at Cheyne Row. 'He was much changed' (it was the year when his weakness steadily increased), 'but so kind, and pleased to see me.'

She returned to her Dumfriesshire home, and three years later Carlyle was laid at rest in the burial-ground of his birthplace. She was not to see the master more, but she keeps of him many kindly and honourable memories, very different from those which some who did not know him might expect to have heard from her.

REGINALD BLUNT.

¹ All the servants at Cheyne Row were very fond of Carlyle, and ready to do their very best for him. Mr. Alexander Carlyle observed that himself during the two or three years he lived there; and his wife, who was with her uncle thirteen years, noticed the same thing.

COCHRANE REDIVIVUS.

THE boatswain's mate thrust his black, grizzled head into the stuffy raised forecastle of H.M. patrol boat *Nassau*. 'Rouse out, lads! Rouse!' he hurled out, hot with some expectation. 'Slip on deck an' see the fun.'

One or two of the watch looked inquisitively at him. A sturdy old seaman shoved his head over the edge of his dipping hammock. 'What for sh'ud we rouse out, say ye? There's no pipe o' a whistle; an' y' tell us as if it wos a bloomin' invite to a sarvice meetin',' he growled.

The mate energetically bobbed up and down his head. Then he wagged a hooked forefinger at them. 'Come out, ye d——d sea lawyer,' he answered in a mysterious voice. 'Y'ud better be on yer feet, an' ready for the call. There is a runner or summat beginnin' to wear out the heels o' this old tub. We'll soon be doin' better nor kickin' about, watchin' for the enemy's cruisers that are lyin', worse luck, safe an' sound—I take my oath on it!—in their own dry docks. Rouse, lads, an' mighty quick about it. Look ye! there'll be plenty yelly suver'ns for ye all, if she's caught!' The next minute the watch had tumbled out and were on deck, eager for some excitement and work.

Lieutenant Hepburn, the commander of the transmogrified and ancient tug of the so-called naval base at Bridgetown, in Barbados, had scrambled on her bridge, and had made for the wheel where his sub-lieutenant was standing. He was now levelling his glasses over the grey morning sea off the starboard bow.

The sub turned from looking at the shapely fleeing vessel, took a fleeting glance at his skipper's stolid face, then at the smoking blockade-runner, then again at Hepburn. The lieutenant's features wore an imperturbable expression. One would have thought that the sub was only accomplishing his usual task of a morning in providing a runner for his superior's delectation.

The lines of intense interest grew slack on Grier's face. Inwardly he swore that one might as well have routed out a bum-boat and afforded Hepburn a sight of it; but the sub was young and enthusiastic: he was yet to become aware that neither thanks

nor commendations are plentiful in the Royal Navy. He cleared his throat.

'She's running in-shore, sir, surely? She looks like a foreign boat, nigh sixteen hundred tons burden.'

At first Hepburn did not reply. His keen, searching grey eyes were picking up every possible detail of the stranger. He stood with one brown hand gripping the bridge rail, the other holding the binoculars close against his sight; he let go his breath heavily; then, withdrawing the glasses, repeatedly winked his eyes, sore with being so mercilessly strained. After a little pause he replied:

'I think so. You cannot mistake her intention. She's hugging the coast, to be ready to bolt in behind that reef to the east'ard, ahead of Kahouanne. She'll be running inside some of these small bays to the sou'-east. If she won't heave to, the work 'll be cut out for us among the confounded sandbanks and cays.'

Again he took a long, careful look at the runner, as with her two slanting smokestacks vomiting great continuous trails of dense black smoke she ran close in on the grey and green coast of northern Guadeloupe. The excitement of the chase infected the sub once more; he riveted his eyes on the quarry. For a few minutes neither spoke. At last the lieutenant shook his head.

'I don't know about reaching ahead of her,' he growled. 'There isn't much in our favour in the matter of speed, at any rate, and this steam-puffer is going as smartly as she'll ever manage. But we'll have a try. It's thundering slow work this continual looking for cruisers and transports that never come!' Then he nodded slightly to himself. 'Below, there,' he cried down the connection tube. 'Send Mr. Norrie to the bridge,' rang into the ear of the watch on the small gear platform. He turned to Grier. 'Man and arm ship, sir. The fo'castle gun to stand by.'

The head of the engineer, beaded with sweat and wet and oil, was shoved above the level of the clean, white bridge.

'Mr. Norrie, I want another knot or more.'

Norrie wiped the trickling perspiration off his oily, smutty face with his broad, greasy palm, making himself only more dirty than before.

'I am afraid, sir, she can't do it,' he answered slowly and emphatically, in the harsh, coarse voice of one whose life has been spent among the thunderous crashing of machinery. 'She can't

do it,' he repeated. 'She's more steam in her belly than the old boilers 'll stand, sir. If she's forced beyond the present pressure, we'll go sky high like a greased rocket!'

Hepburn gave an abrupt gesticulation with his head. His calm, steady tones contrasted melodiously with the creaking voice of the engineer. 'Blow us to blazes; but I must have that vessel close on my quarter, sir,' was his impassive reply.

For an instant the engineer looked somewhat blankly at his officer. Then, saluting, he said as he turned, 'Very good, sir, you shall have it.'

When he reached the engine-room companion, he cast a long look at the leading vessel, at the sea, at the men on the fore-castle head; with a hopeless shake of his head he disappeared down the ladder. But within the next ten minutes the anxious commander felt, beneath his feet, multitudinous little muffled throbbings and shiverings throughout the boat's strong steel frame: they told the tale of over-driven engines, and boilers near bursting pressure.

The *Nassau* was swinging along at top speed with as much shuddering and thudding and shivering as if she still had a small fleet of harbour flats in tow. With her three-inch quick-firer on the fore-castle, and two six-pounders and two Colts abaft, she made a brave show for an erstwhile tug; on the whole she was efficient enough for her patrolling duties. The utter unpreparedness of the Admiralty, the lack of reinforcements long promised for our colonial bases, the foolish ostrich-in-the-sand policy of the Government in not recognising the hostility of Continental Administrations, and utilising the immense resources of the country for defence, had compelled the newly appointed naval Commander-in-Chief to use the material at hand, no matter what it was. For, as usual, cruisers, torpedo boats, destroyers, and all, were at a bargain for repairing yards and refitters: Nemesis had overtaken the highly paid, slow-working, autocratic royal dockyards; with them everything was in arrears and at sixes and sevens. While enemies, stout and long-prepared, knocked at the gates of the Empire and at the entries to its City.

As she swung along the *Nassau* made a brave show. But the smuts falling abundantly from the thick smoke (the small reserve of smokeless coal at Bridgetown had been exhausted within three days after the un-anticipated outbreak of war) made a filthy mess of her white deck and spotless brasswork; till, with

a sharp sudden swirl, the reeky cloud eddied to leeward in great obscuring masses. Astern the whirling screw beat huge patches of foam in the seething waters. The whole body of the steel fabric jarred and throbbed as if beaten by great iron hammers while the engines ground and stamped incessantly. From time to time perspiring and smutched faces appeared through the stokehold hatchway; eyes were cast aslant to starboard; then with disconsolate grimaces the several owners vanished again to their broiling work. The sorely pressed boat sped on dividing the sea into foam-tipped, ridged lines with her rushing, cutting bows.

Hepburn, who had been standing with his back against the little chart-house and his glasses at his eyes, suddenly squared his shoulders. 'Grier,' he called abruptly, 'do you not think we are gaining on her?'

The sub balanced his long lithe body to the pitch and roll of the little vessel; swaying gently to and fro to the motion, he stared at the runner now rising on the starboard quarter: already he could make out plainly small details aboard her. The expression on his face was enough for the lieutenant. So he said very calmly: 'If she shoves her nose out to sea we'll cut her off.'

The sun slipped out above the pink and mauve horizon. It changed the vivid grey-green of the sea into an intense blue colour and tipped the mounting waves with golden sheen. The *Nassau* was running swiftly down toward Kahouanne islet ten miles off the starboard. To the southward the fresh green shore of Guadeloupe was visible. The land near the shore stood steep and covered with wood. Far in the south Sainte-Rose, like a sugar-loaf, climbed into the air; behind it, other hills of the island range trailed away into the south-south-east, more blue and more indistinct as they faded into the rapidly thickening atmosphere of the dewy morning.

Hepburn gave a grunt of satisfaction as he put down the binoculars. 'We've got her now,' he ejaculated. 'Fo'castle, there,' he cried. 'Throw a shell athwart that steamer's bows; heave it close!'

Crash! went the seven-foot little monster as its lean muzzle spat out fourteen pounds of live shell, to throw the explosive just a little way short. Then a great puff of white smoke broke out from the runner's stern. Her projectile fell a mile away, wide to starboard. The lieutenant gave a short, emphatic curse in his astonishment at the proffered impertinence.

'Inshore with her head sixteen points, wheel,' he cried angrily. 'Fo'castle, cover her amidships! Stand by to fire!'

The daring foreigner repeated her dose of ridiculous defiance. But before the sharp roar of the three-inch gun again broke in the air, she was showing her tail as, in hotter haste than ever, she ran for the shore. The *Nassau's* shell burst harmlessly in the midst of the creaming wake.

'Up helm.' With a swirl the old boat came round.

'Into the chart-house,' Hepburn ordered the sub. 'This chap has had his plan all cut and dry before we came on the scene; he'll not run his d——d nose on any cay or finger of rock; he knows his way about. By G——d! he's through the reef. Take squint at the bearings, wheel. North-east three-quarter north, from the Islet, it is. So, wheel. Steady, my lad!'

The little boat rushed on, leaving a long, dusky feather of smoke outlined against the shimmering pearl of the morning sky. Sainte-Rose shadowed itself higher and bluer. The steep declivities revealed their trees and rushing streams. Behind the surf-beaten outer reef of the Grand Cul-de-sac Marin, stretching from Kahouanne Islet to the eastward, at a distance of from one to three miles, nearly as far as the coast of Grande Terre, lay a reach of smooth water. None but the half-caste fishermen, who are the only pilots, can tell how dangerous are the intricate channels of the Cul-de-sac Marin.

The lieutenant cast a swift glance at the rapidly rising land. Far away, south-east by east, through a narrow break in the high shore, a few faint white blotches showed the neighbourhood of a small coast town.

Grier saluted. 'It's the Grande Coulee Pass, sir, they've taken. Will they not be making for Mahaut? There's good anchorage there, in seven to eight and three-a-quarter to four-a-quarter fathoms.'

His commanding officer shook his head as with glasses glued to his straining sight he traced the escaping runner by means of her smoke. 'No,' he rejoined. 'They'll be running her into some of these small bays where they think we can't follow: that's how they've been doing it with so much success at Martinique!'

He took away the binocular from his eyes. 'She's not running easterly enough, sandbanks and all, to make Mahaut,' he said slowly. 'What water is there in the Grande Coulee?'

'From eight to eight and a half fathoms. It lies fair and square between Tête à l'Anglais and Blanc Islet.'

'Thank you. I'll take her in, then,' was the confident reply as Hepburn bespoke the engine-room.

'Half speed,' echoed into Norrie's ear; the telegraph rang out in reply almost as the engines were being slowed. 'Dead slow'; and for a minute or two the boat forged slowly toward the surf-battered reef, pitching and tossing jerkily in the increasing washes and back swirls of sea.

By now the runner had ensconced herself beyond the break in the highland; a very faint smutch of smoke in the clear atmosphere betrayed her. She did not imagine that the Britisher would risk routing her out. Tortuous channels amid numerous shoals and baffling reefs were more than a secure protection.

'Full speed ahead' sent the *Nassau* on her perilous errand. She slid out of the long smooth-backed swells into the broken water dashing on the reef; she rocked and jumbled about like a paper model. With difficulty the lieutenant kept his footing; the sub had to cling for his life once or twice; all hands held fast.

With heart beating fast, and eyes glued on a small islet crowned with a palmetto tree as his landmark for making the channel, Hepburn drove the labouring boat forward. He could see nothing but shattered water, and flying masses of spray and foam. The stout boat gave a tremble and a sharp jerk all along her length; heads of surf were buffeting her on every side, deluging the deck from poop to forecastle; clouds of yeasty brine blinded the lieutenant's sight, but his hands never shifted; the next moment she had dashed through the short rocky channel into smooth water. He had piloted his boat to a hairsbreadth.

'Dead slow ahead!' sounded into the engine-room. 'Uncover and look to your guns, men. Throw off the small belts of the Colts; the 500 cartridges instead. Port and starboard guns hand up shell; 2,500 yards; ready. Cover your enemy's flash if no order given,' were rattled off by the lieutenant as the little vessel surged up one of the passes to the eastward.

For the next half-hour cries of 'Starboard helm! Port helm easy! Stop her! Back her! Dead slow ahead! Easy on, then port your helm, sir,' mingled with the hails from the leadsmen on either bows. Through his caution, and guided to a great degree by the colour of the water, Hepburn avoided grounding on any of

the many dangerous shoals or buckling up the vessel's nose on any of the reefs. Elated with success, he slowly brought the boat round Negre Point. She was riding off that break in the land.

Before him the precipitous shore lay silent as if never a man had set foot upon it. It afforded secure and immense stretches of cover for an enterprising opponent.

The lieutenant took an uneasy look all around. His eye caught the blink of the innumerable shoals plainly showing themselves through the pellucid green water, as if, confident of their prey on the *Nassau's* return, they had no need to hide their treachery; he wondered if ever he would manage to gain the open sea once more: his engines might get smashed, for the coal-bunkers, their one protection, were deep but narrow. He turned sharply to the sub.

'Grier, have as much chain and cable slung over amidships as the men can lay hands on; it will help to protect the engines and stokeholds. Then go to quarters.'

Hepburn signalled 'Half-speed ahead.' Then, having taken up his binoculars, he closely scanned the thick tangle of trees and undergrowths, and the cover afforded by rocks on the declivities between which he had to float. With his hand he motioned the course to the wheel.

A few minutes passed. The patrol boat, with steady pulsations from her engines, persistently shoved a way into danger. Hardly a sound was to be heard on board, save the dull dumping of the machines and the churning of the screws. The sense of coming danger affected the men, for they all stood alert. The captain of the forecastle gun murmured garulously to number three of his squad; some at the starboard quick-firer were looking with wide, dilated eyes at the nearing slope, as if seeing approaching death; at the port Colt one was snapping its trigger to make sure of its deadly action, another was looking about him as if to preserve his mind from being intimidated, while the sub was keeping his brain occupied by active and accurate inspection of the guns and squads. A little apart from the helmsman the young lieutenant, a distinct mark, stood silent on the bridge, ceaselessly examining the neighbourhood. There was a set look on his face that made the lines of the forehead and mouth very strong and grim. Near the mouth of the break the water shoaled rapidly. The leadsmen's hails

made the lieutenant twitch his eyebrows in nervousness; they came quick and alarming: 'By the mark, two three-quarter fathom!' 'By the mark, two a quarter!' Yet stubbornly he held on, though the ebb was running fast. The *Nassau's* draught was nine feet ten inches!

All was still. On a weak inland breeze came the sickly, rank smell of rotten vegetable matter and fœtid mud. A few alarmed water-fowl appeared to view, a few guans on the shore trees, and an occasional alligator that, like a balk of burnt wood, rolled off its lair of brown mud to enter the water with a noisy splash.

Hepburn moved to the wheel, and himself swung the vessel's head to port, then again heavily to starboard, clearing an awkward outlying bank of mud. As he stepped back, high up behind the mask of thick shrubs and lofty trees to starboard his keen sight seized on a glint among the green. Like a report, sharp and resonant, came the order, 'Fo'castle, forty degrees starboard! Starboard, twelve elevation! Ready, men!' Then 'Full speed ahead!' stirred up his ambling engines.

The next instant the challenge came. Crimson sparks shot into the sunlit air. Harsh metallic reports lashed the ear. The masked battery had opened fire.

The one hundred and twenty-seven feet of the light-built *Nassau* shook to the discharge of her guns. The shrill-mouthed six-pounders and screaming Colts sounded loud above the hellish din of the enemy's Canet breechloaders. A fearful tornado of shot and shell swept the Britisher's deck. It cut down the crew of the three-inch gun all but two, who worked the more fiendishly hard; it put the starboard six-pounder at once out of action. Then, crash! crash! came rifle-firing in sections from among the undergrowths on the port bow. There infantry were concentrated in force: the s-s-shur! of their Lebel's cut the beaten air like myriad whiplongs.

The lieutenant, unshaken, as if the deadly hail were rain, tried to locate the battery more accurately; but the glint was gone in the passing of the speeding boat, and the enemy's smokeless powder served them well. Yet the fierce fire from the re-manned bow gun had plugged something somewhere. The cannonade was slackening.

The gunner's mate mounted the bridge ladder, and calmly saluted as if at drill. 'Port Colt jammed, sir.' The next second he was writhing on the bridge, shrieking with agony, his spine

fractured by a bullet. As the lieutenant had turned to him the helmsman threw his arms above his head, and, with a harsh, gurgling yell, fell in a heap beside the binnacle, shot through the heart.

The expression on Hepburn's ghastly white face flashed into one of extreme torture. For the moment fear pierced him when he felt the staunch little boat shudder like a wounded live thing as the enemy managed to hull her repeatedly, fortunately above the water-line forward of the stokehold. Even as he swung her nose away from a snag in the little river his confidence sped back. He threw a look along her disordered deck; it was a bloody scene; fiends not men plied the hot, hiccoughing pieces, working amid the torn and bloody bodies of comrades.

So long as the engines were not damaged he could hold his own. And Norrie did not fail his commander. Down in the sweltering bowels of the sorely mauled boat the chief was keeping one eye on his steam-gauge and one eye on his engines; one hand on the regulator wheel, and one on the controlling wheel of the reversing gear; one ear at the connection tube, and one listening to the hurrying beat of the machinery. Like his men he heard the roaring of the guns, and felt the recurrent tremors and shiverings of the hull; he only gave the more attention to his onerous duties. At last his turn came.

'Dead slow ahead.' For the *Nassau* had drawn ahead out of the fixed trajectory of the battery; and none too soon.

Cautiously the lieutenant rounded the abrupt rocky corner of the narrow channel. The next minute, pursued by a distant ineffectual fire from the infantry, he was on the heels of the runner.

Before him was a small stretch of water in a shallow basin of low land. At the far end lay the small port previously described; with a wharf running along its sea front, and two torpedo boats at moorings before it. Within two hundred yards of the bend lay the smart runner at anchor, the steam still escaping from her blow-offs. Bugles were sounding and soaring, and trumpets were blowing. A mass of men was in possession of the water-edge on each side of the wharf. Two guns were being rapidly shifted into position on the quay itself. On the near shore infantry and some cavalry were careering into the small town.

The *Nassau's* crew had done good work and tiring; much more was to be accomplished; they had only won the firstfruits.

The enemy's sharp rally had taken the backbone out of the survivors. Many stood at quarters, uneasily, and with uncertain shifting expressions on their bloodstained and grimy faces.

'Men,' rang clearly all over the deck from the bridge, upon which a musketry fire was already being directed from some infantry standing their ground, 'we've got to do it. If we don't settle their hash,' and Hepburn's arm with a sweep took in the enemy, 'they'll settle ours. Remember the Old Country, lads!'

As the men vigorously cheered, the order came 'Fo'castle, a hundred and fifty yards on the bows. Fire!' Immediately in the air sounded the whizzing boom of the spinning shells, as the three-inch gun joyously took up its task again. They flopped into the water close to the runner; the foaming head of water thrown up by them fell aboard her: only an unexpected twist of the *Nassau's* rudder, to clear a nose of rock in mid-channel, had saved the treacherous neutral.

The air sang with the bullets of the infantry; screeched with the long-drawn strident reports of the nine-pounders on the wharf. Three shots from the steamer flew high. The next moment Hepburn had run in the *Nassau*. Her depressed port guns raked the runner's deck.

'Boarders away' was his yell, as he leapt from his bridge on the enemy's starboard bow. With a roar his men followed.

Panic seized the runner's crew; without waiting to receive their visitors they jumped overboard. The officers, led by their captain, rallied round their poop gun. Before they could even throw back the breechblock the chattering Colt had riddled them to atoms. Only the skipper escaped the deadly shower. He made a desperate leap, and, clearing the poop rails, fell into the water; bullets of friend and foe pelted the surface; but, apparently untouched, he dived, on reappearing struck out, then dived again. When next seen he was crawling into the brushwood near the elbow.

The *Nassau* was doing her best; her men had rare targets. But never a man of them hurrahed when the shells burst on the unfortunate town and wharf. Already smoke was bubbling up from the moored torpedo boat; the other had hauled on her spring, and bow-on was firing hotly, indiscriminately. The two guns on the wharf were erratically pitching shells as fast as they could fire. To port, above the town, four pieces of heavy

artillery were being wheeled into position on an extensive knoll. Behind the rising ground, one thousand five hundred yards beyond the knoll, and extending some two thousand three hundred yards more, guns were shoving their evil nozzles over the irregular and rocky crest. If Hepburn was to accomplish his work he would need to do it smartly. So, throwing a prize crew of five men and a petty officer on board the runner with injunctions to get her ready for weighing the anchor and two bow kedges, he headed on the town at full speed, raking the shore on each side with fearful execution as he went in.

The lieutenant took up a position before the wharf and lashed out. That plucky torpedo boat harassed him sorely. The beaches were lines of spurting fire. On the battered wharf one gun, smashed about the breech by a lucky shot of the starboard six-pounder, lay with its black smoking muzzle sticking into the air; its mate was firing wildly now; the torrent of bullets from a Colt, sweeping the site from end to end, was knocking the gunners to pieces. Again and again gallant fellows re-manned the piece to meet a certain death. Hepburn saw the men of the remaining torpedo boat hurriedly pull for the shore; their boat was struck somewhere; great clouds of steam burst from her deck and completely enveloped her. It was the spitfire town that would beat him off. The bullets of the infantry spattered against the wood-work, sending the fearful splinters flying. Fortunately, firing in platoons, their aim was too high to inflict much damage. Then the Colts were turned on them.

Hepburn calmly scrutinised his demons at the guns, as, himself at the wheel, the *Nassau* moved up and down, vomiting destruction. They were as full of fight as ever, though terribly reduced in numbers. As he put the rudders down, and was yelling 'Port engine full speed astern,' a seaman, grimy and naked save for his trousers, mounted the forward ladder. On reaching the bridge he saw the lieutenant had his back to him. Collectedly he stepped to his officer. 'Crew of fo'castle all down, sir,' he cried hurriedly, saluting as he spoke. With a curse Hepburn wheeled. Only a second ago they were there, working like madmen; each man doing the work of three. But bullets had found their billets.

Grier could not leave the deck. He himself must go. Never a moment did the lieutenant hesitate. 'Slow down. Stop her!' rang into the engine-room, for like lightning the lieutenant

calculated that the boat would bring up just opposite the knoll. He dropped over the rail on to the break of the forecastle, and ran to the gun. A bullet grazed his left cheek, another passed through his cap, lifting it from his head. It was the knoll guns and infantry that were plugging him; the other artillery was out of range.

On the forecastle the steam windlass, stanchions and fore-bitts were demolished. Around the gun was a pond of blood and huddled bodies. One man was lying on his side, dead; another was grovelling on his stomach, a broad stream of blood welling from beneath him; another was sitting upright against the gun mounting, holding fast his shattered left leg with his hands to keep himself from bleeding to death. The others were dead, mangled with shot beyond decency.

With the survivor's aid the lieutenant brought the piece into action. The dismembered seaman dragged himself away. 'It's them d——d guns on that there knoll,' he said hoarsely.

The lieutenant nodded slightly, then, as if it were all mere practice, he carefully trained the hot gun; remembering, as he did so, that once-a-day he had been a crack shot. Then he let out at the knoll spuming with fiery flashes and smoke. His fourteen-pound shells were neatly dropped on its summit. He smiled gladly. Smells of powder, steam, blood and burning wood caught his nostrils; the madness and murrain of battle seized his brain: everything became suddenly vague, unreal: except those belching muzzles on the knoll and their dull voluminous screaming. Now he saw them through wreaths of thin, white vapour; now they were buried in it from sight; still their crimson flashes and throaty roars beat for ever upon his frenzied senses. He raged loudly, deliriously. Like a superhuman being he worked. Seconds, minutes, hours, years might have elapsed for all Hepburn was conscious of time: he was only aware of those two flashing nightmare demons, fighting to thwart his will.

There came a mighty blinding flash; a dazzling glare illumined the air; then came a rolling, crashing thunder that deafened the ear for seconds. Dust and smoke, earth and masses of solid material were shot into the air: he had blown up the ammunition carts in the rear of the knoll; the guns and their dauntless squads were obliterated.

The lieutenant ceased firing. All of a sudden he was aware

that silence reigned. Only some desultory reports far to port and starboard and the burning town told of an enemy's existence. He took in a deep and troubled breath; with confused eyes he stared around. Automatically he observed, and without dismay or wonder, that the funnel was shot away down to the heater; the chart-house roof blown off, jagged pieces of its sides protruding against the intense blue sky; and that one of the bridge port stays was wholly gone. Then a cheering tremendous for so few throats broke on his ears. He started.

Grier with his head and left arm bandaged leapt on the bridge. 'Mr. Hepburn. Sir,' he yelled hoarsely. 'Mr. Hepburn.' He caught sight of his commander standing alone on the battered and blood-stained fore-castle, and jumped down to him. 'She's making water, sir; the pumps can't keep it under. Bows are started by the firing of the three-inch. She's split along her fore starboard plates with shotholes.' And Grier gesticulated madly as if he were signalling a battleship.

In a moment the lieutenant was himself, cool, and collected.

He swung himself upon the bridge. 'Full speed astern,' echoed into the engine-room, where the hardworking staff still held their ground, fighting against a more terrible foe than any that fires a cannon. Their strained faces told the tale of the intensity of their appalling combat.

Hepburn turned to the prize. 'Prize, ahoy! send your boats at once; mine shot away. Haul in on bow kedges, smartly there!' He hailed the sub. 'Get the wounded together. I'll run alongside the prize if the boat'll float. Time-fuses to be laid in the magazines. The gunner to stand-by to fire them.'

In eight minutes more the prize was slipping down the narrow channel.

As she rounded the elbow a thundering reverberation split the heavy air; an immense puff of black smoke rose above the trees, and, spreading into a huge cloud of dusky vapour, overhung the scene like a funeral pall. The *Nassau* was gone. But her commander had won the day.

Without opposition he passed out and again threaded his precarious passage to the Grande Coulee. This time it was comparatively easy. But few spoke aboard the prize save the leadsmen and the numerous look-outs. The lieutenant, himself at the wheel, never spoke except to issue orders. The expressions fleeting over his dirty, tired face showed much of the

workings of his mind. His five-and-thirty dead weighed heavily on him.

When Grier came limping along to report, the lieutenant opened his mouth.

Hepburn was the first to speak. He had looked again at his weary, ragged, begrimed men; every one tired to the bone, yet hard at work; some tenderly handling the ghastly wounded into the temporary cockpit in the poop, some swabbing down the soiled deck with gushing hose and stiff brooms, some overhauling the guns, and fittings, and tackle.

'Here we are, with a prize worth forty or fifty thousand pounds in food stuffs and war stores,' he cried bitterly. 'But I'd rather have those thirty-five dead men of mine alive again than all the prizes in the world. It's cruel, cruel work, Grier. Oh, that d—d slackness of our rabbit-brained Admiralty. Chucking us into meat tins; giving us popguns and insufficient men, and expecting us to come out top, no matter what the odds! Why won't they give us right boats to work with? And won't they sit in their armchairs at home, and yelp about my loss of the vessel and thirty-five efficient. I wish to God I had my men alive again,' was his troubled cry. For the dockyards of the British Admiralty still re-echo the complaint of Samuel Pepys. Sufficient for their day is their insufficiency thereof!

With a lurch the smart trader plunged into the seething channel. The rolls of sea without were being met by the welling water within; the stream boiled up in numberless spurts and heads of foam and green water; it flooded the bloody upper works, laving the bodies of the dead. A shower of spray smashed at the lieutenant's eyes as, with every nerve taut, he held the stiff vessel up to the pounding blows of the welcoming swells. The next moment she was sliding through the way she had come, through the tumult of breaking, tossing waters, into the Caribbean Sea.

PATRICK VAUX.

A LONDONER'S LOG-BOOK.

IX.

IN my younger days there was a popular book called 'Autumns on the Spey.' Last year, Selina's brother, who is now the owner of The Sawpits, rudely said that we ought to bring out a companion volume and call it 'Autumns on the Make.' Selina was beyond measure incensed by this clumsy witticism, which has, indeed, led to a certain coolness between Tom Topham-Sawyer and ourselves; but for my own part I was constrained to confess that the gibe had something in it. When people make their home in London, the right disposal of the autumn becomes an urgent problem in their domestic economy.

In the early years of our married life, the 'General Idea,' as the strategists say, of our autumn manœuvres was something of the following kind. Towards July Selina used to pick a quarrel with the cook, which ended in that functionary arranging to leave about the beginning of August. The next move was to develop a vehement interest in the career of the 'up-and-down maid,' or 'tweeny,' as she is called in the advertisement columns of 'The Lectern' (where Ritualistic footmen advertise that wages are not so much a consideration as Church privileges), and to arrange for her to better herself by going to a place where she would be wholly 'up' or wholly 'down,' and 'a tweeny' no longer. By these methods we reduced our domestic establishment to three. The housemaid remained in London to take care of the house and the policeman. Selina's own attendant was

'A maid whom there were none to praise,
And very few to love,'

but of those few the dingy retainer was one, and she and he, happy in one another's company, went forth with us to face the desperate chances of the autumn campaign. Our first 'objective' was Bertha's native home—The Sawpits. Mr. Topham-Sawyer was then alive, and he was very well pleased to entertain his daughter and son-in-law during the tranquil month of August, when, to say the truth, he found it rather difficult to provide himself with

society. Loamshire is not a grouse-producing country; and our amusements consisted of tennis-tournaments, picnics, and boating-parties on the Slowwater. Not very lively, perhaps, but health-giving, and, above all, inexpensive. From The Sawpits we moved at the beginning of the shooting-season to Proud flesh Park, where Selina made herself agreeable by pasting pictures on screens, and answering acrostics, and singing in the evening, when she was duly pressed and the audience not too critical. I confess her performance sometimes reminded me of the occasion when 'Miss Jessie Brown sang "Jock o' Hazeldean" a little out of tune; but we were none of us musical, though Miss Jenkyns beat time out of time, by way of appearing to be so.' This is quite the tone of The Sawpits. When at length the head of my family showed unmistakably that he had enjoyed quite enough of our society, we pursued the even tenor of our way to the Barrow and the Dingle, the Abbey and the Manor; culminating at the Lord Lieutenant's dilapidated castle, and not disdaining a quiet Sunday with my Oxford friend, Sam Greenstole, at his comfortable vicarage, which fitted in very well between a week at the Wellbores' and three days with the De Trops. For the first few years of our married life, this plan of campaign served admirably well. But time has brought its changes. My father-in-law reposes under, instead of in, the family pew, and Tom acts the head of the house with a frank and jovial rudeness which is all his own. We therefore rather avoid The Sawpits, and dear old Mrs. Topham-Sawyer's dower-house is not exactly the place which one would choose for a prolonged visit. At Proud flesh Park a new generation is springing up, in which I find myself humiliatingly superannuated. The last time I played cricket with my young cousins against the local Band of Hope, my cut for one was greeted with derisive cheers of 'Good old Bob!' 'Stick to it, daddy!' and 'By Jove! He's a stiff 'un!'

My bulk has increased considerably during the last few years, and my friends rather avoid giving me a mount. 'I am sure I don't blame them,' says Selina with characteristically imperfect sympathy. 'What with the oceans of champagne you drink whenever you have a chance, and your mania for greasy puddings, you are becoming a perfect object. Riding indeed! when I saw you on Bertha's hack, I only wondered that the people on the road didn't tell you to get down and carry it. I hear that Lord Salisbury has taken to a tricycle, and I am sure you ought to get

one. It's simply tempting Providence to trust yourself on a bicycle.'

Thus cricket and riding have failed me, and I am not in much greater request for shooting parties. Indeed, I may say that I have now renounced all sports of the field, or been renounced by them. As Matthew Arnold wrote to his friend Wyndham Slade, 'I shall never look along the deadly tube again; but this will be no great blessing for the brute creation, as I never used to hit them.'

Thus the general outline of our autumn plans has been gradually modified, and for the last few years we have spent August with Mrs. Topham-Sawyer at Harrogate. The dear old lady pays for the flies, her maid does Selina's hair, and 'The Granby's' charge for a private sitting-room, when divided between three, is quite supportable. But this year even that resource has failed us. Mrs. Topham-Sawyer has forsaken Harrogate for Bath, and Selina, who has been declaring all the summer that she wanted 'tone,' has flatly refused to be 'boiled to death in that relaxing hole.' After Tom's outrageous rudeness about 'Autumns on the Make,' she declines to propose herself to The Sawpits, and the cousins at Proud flesh have significantly informed us that the youngest boy has brought back chicken-pox from Harrow. Hotels are expensive. Lodging-houses are undignified. We have a very good house over our head in Stuccovia. Bertha is paying a round of visits in Loamshire, so we are freed from all necessity of amusing her; and Selina, after narrowly eyeing my pass-book, professed that, as we have to pay rent and taxes in London, besides an unheard-of rate levied by the Borough Council, she could not see the fun of running up fresh bills at the sea-side.

So it has ended in our spending August and September at home, and, for my own part, I confess that I do not dislike the plan. I wear my oldest suit of tweed, smoke a pipe in the street, and divide Hyde Park (which looks its best when replanted for the autumn) with an eccentric gentleman who talks to himself, and of whom the parkkeeper tells me in confidence that he is a *Hirish* gent who lost his property along of old Gladstone's muddling, and, in a manner of speaking, has never been the same man since. I practise my French on bewildered aliens who, misreading their Baedeker, have persuaded themselves that Buckingham Palace is the Tower of London. Both my clubs are closed for cleaning, and we are quartered on our neighbours;

and this always introduces an agreeable element of novelty into one's social experience. At the Athenæum I hobnob with the Bishop of Barchester, who has just returned from Switzerland with his third wife and selections from the families of her two sainted predecessors. At the Guards' Club I try to imagine myself a soldier, and, regarding myself furtively in the glass, fancy that in my prime I should have looked very well in a scarlet tunic and a bearskin. But, as my aunt (from whom I had expectations) very properly observed when I was choosing my profession, 'After all, there is always the risk of war,' and I am sure it is a risk which nature never designed me to face. So things are best as they are.

Meanwhile Stuccovia is nearly deserted. The Barrington-Bounderleys are dogging the steps of an Illustrious Personage at Homburg, and the Cashingtons may be seen at Brighton urging their wild career from the Madeira Walk even to Medina Terrace, while their motor-car divides the honours of the sea-front and the admiration of the flymen with Mr. Winans's trotters. But, though our fashionable leaders have deserted us, old Lady Farringford, whom it is increasingly difficult to dislodge from her own fireside, still trundles up and down Cromwell Road in her pre-Adamite landau, and often gives Selina a convenient lift to Harrod's Stores or Gorrings'. Moreover, the Soulsbys always make a point of spending September in London.

I believe I have intimated in previous papers that Mr. Soulsby is passionately devoted to Nature. Like Mr. Witherden the Notary, he cultivates an equal love for 'the mountainous Alps on the one hand and the humming-bird on the other.' The first dandelion of spring awakens in him thoughts that lie too deep for tears, and after a choir-treat in the impervious shades of Epping he has been heard to declaim with contagious enthusiasm:

'Red o'er the forest peers the setting sun.'

Spring-time in the Alps is a theme with which, in the Easter season, he frequently decorates his sermons, and even 'the Master,' as he calls Ruskin, was never more tenderly eloquent about the 'taller gentians and the white narcissus,' the 'scented undulations,' and 'the waves of everlasting green.' As a matter of fact, Mr. Soulsby is so weak a vessel at sea that he has only once attempted the passage of the Channel, and prefers to reciprocate the many-twinkling smile of Ocean from the cheerful security of Margate pier. He always takes his holiday immediately after Easter. The

spiritual tension of the preceding six weeks, followed by its inevitable reaction, has left him terribly unstrung, and it is necessary to recruit his nerves before he faces the responsibilities of the summer months, when nearly all the pews at St. Ursula's are occupied, and chairs are not seldom placed in the aisle. 'London is too vast for me,' he says plaintively. 'I am like the child in St. Paul's, and feel inclined to say, "Take me away. The church is so big and I am so little!"'

By September the responsibility is diminished. Stuccovia is abandoned to cats and caretakers. St. Ursula's congregation sinks to vanishing-point. Young Bumpstead goes off on his holiday, and, while he is blazing away in the paternal stubbles, he 'leaves,' as he says, 'the old Vic. to run the show on his own.' Mr. Soulsby obtains help for Sundays from his friends of the Mystification, and on weekdays refreshes his parched spirit by renewed contact with Nature. He 'worships the Mighty Mother'—to use his own phrase—from the deck of a Thames steamer or on a secluded bench in Richmond Park; and from every scene and every incident he draws fresh and happy illustrations for his Advent sermons. 'The gorgeous but melancholy beauty of the sunlit autumnal landscape' awakes the deepest echoes of his soul. A meditation in Kensington Gardens,

'With sheddings of the pining umbrage tinged,'

suggests innumerable lessons of Human Mutability. The sight of the pleasure-boats on the Thames inspired the famous passage in which he exhorted the young men of his congregation to row the perilous and exhausting race of life with their eyes fixed steadily on the goal.

But while Mr. Soulsby is thus congenially and profitably employed, Mrs. Soulsby is rather badly bored. She is, as her husband sometimes tells us in confidence, a creature made for Society. 'Like a sweet-toned canary from a golden cage, she flew, almost unawares, into my welcoming window. She gladdens my work with her song; but oh! she deserves a better audience.' This being the case even when Stuccovia is at its gayest, Mrs. Soulsby is extremely dull, and even, I fancy, a little peevish, in the solitude of August and September. To her, therefore, our determination to spend the autumn in London was distinctly a boon. She and Selina make little trips together. Sometimes they 'do' the City churches, with Mr. Hare's 'Walks in London

for their guide. They spend a happy day at the Stores. They listen with unabated joy to 'The Lost Chord' at the Promenade Concerts. On Sunday afternoons they desert St. Ursula's and make pilgrimages to hear Canon Gore at the Abbey or Canon Holland at St. Paul's. They look up long-forgotten friends in the remotest outskirts of Wimbledon or Tooting, disport themselves on suburban croquet-grounds, or drive away dull care with Ping-pong. But it is neither Croquet nor Ping-pong that, in this season of social depression, really sustains the flagging spirits of Selina and Mrs. Soulsby. Dr. Chalmers once spoke of the 'Expulsive Power of a New Affection.' The mild joys of 'Squails' and 'Fish-Ponds' which satisfied us in our youth; the maturer excitements of Nap and Poker; have speedily and simultaneously been expelled by Bridge.

Privately I doubt whether Selina would ever have become a victim to this new distraction if she had been guided solely by its merits as a game; for she really doesn't care a jot for the best game that ever was invented. But these pages have been written in vain if my readers do not realise by this time that Selina's heart beats in harmony with the music of the highest spheres. 'Everyone plays Bridge,' and Selina must play it too. A rumour has reached her that the odious Mrs. Goldbug, who behaved so rudely to her at the Great County Sale, has climbed to the topmost rung of the social ladder by dint of her willingness to play Bridge all day long, and of the graceful alacrity with which she loses her money to Illustrious Personages. Even Selina's old cousin, Miss Welbeck,

'A charred and wrinkled piece of womanhood'

if ever there was one, a cardsharper from her youth, who had long been left high and dry by the receding wave of fashion, has acquired a sudden fame as the best female Bridge-player in London, and is called 'Ponte Vecchia' in some of the smartest houses in Piccadilly.

This was enough, if indeed it was not too much, for Selina, who threw herself into the study of Bridge with all the intensity of a singularly intense nature, and spent laborious days in consulting the lively oracles of 'Slam' and 'Boaz.' She has clear views about the necessity of 'playing,' 'calling,' 'passing,' and 'doubling to the score.' She is severe on the weak player who declares no-trumps when he has a certainty in hearts, and is loud

on 'protective black suit declarations by the dealer.' Like as a stage-struck damsel wanders about the garden, reciting the ravings of Ophelia, even so I hear my Selina murmuring to herself in secret places such cryptic precepts as these: 'On a passed diamond call, a strengthening heart lead is advisable'; and 'A good partner may often be given a doubtful no-trump heart or diamond declaration, when a weak one should only be entrusted with spades.' My midnight dreams are haunted by a hollow voice which mournfully reiterates: 'With a plain suit singleton and a single trump, a lead for the ruff is quite justifiable.'

Now I confess that to me all this jargon is a tale of little meaning, though the words are strong. But I find to my astonishment that it conveys something to the mystic mind of Mr. Soulsby. Whether what it conveys to him bears any resemblance to what its author intended, I would not undertake to say; for our Vicar, like all his brethren of the Deep Church, is an adept in the art of reading his own more recondite ideas into any passage which he admires. His preaching is nothing if not topical; and the close attention which he bestows on the transactions of Selina's Bridge-table has led me to believe that he is contemplating some allusion to the game in one of his lectures at the Parochial Club. I have told already how he urged the young oarsmen of his congregation to row their races by a method which would certainly have landed their boat in difficulties; and the counsel was well meant, though obscured by the perverseness of technicalities. The moral lessons of cricket are more easily handled, and the Vicar, as President of the St. Ursula's Cricket Club, is eloquent on 'the ready hand, the quick eye, the simultaneous action, the training for life's battle,' which are engendered by our national pastime. On football he waxes even poetic, and last winter when our team, captained by Bumpstead, celebrated in a debauch of cocoa and buns its victory over the Amalgamated Cabdrivers' Orphanage, he electrified the party by declaiming the football-song which he had sung as a boy at Lycurgus House Academy, Peckham:

When you've had the toil and the struggle,
The battle of ankle and shin,
'T is hard in the hour of triumph
To pass it another to win;
But that is the luck of the battle,
And thick must be taken with thin.

They tell us the world is a struggle,
And life is a difficult run,
Where often a brother will finish
The victory we have begun.
What matter? We learned it at Peckham,
And that was the way that we won.

Now, supposing that my surmise is well founded, and that Mr. Soulsby intends to add to this athletic trilogy a lecture on the Game of Life as illustrated by the Laws of Bridge, I commend to him these wise words from the sporting column of 'Classy Cuttings':

'Judgment in Bridge is not limited to the declaration of trumps; but (as in life) consists in rightly estimating the capacities and temperaments of both your adversaries and partner, and trusting them or not accordingly.'

When I was at Oxford I had the advantage of attending the present Bishop of Rochester's lectures on Political Science; and I hope I can still recognise the commodity, even when I meet it in the columns of a society journal.

THE MOTIVE OF TRAGEDY.

It is the business of the critic to cut through literary or social overgrowths to the bedrock of fact. This duty, always salutary, is more than ever urgent at a time like the present, when even those who think are often too busy to form opinions on the facts, and are compelled to content themselves with conclusions based upon the work of other men's minds. It is in this spirit of frank inquiry that I propose to ask in what the characteristic motive of the form of dramatic literature known as Tragedy consists—to inquire, that is, what is the nature of the central thought which arouses in the mind of the spectator the emotions usually associated with the spectacle of tragic action.

Such frankness is necessary at the outset; for in an age when dogma is discredited we shrink from admitting religion to a share in our intellectual triumphs. Yet it is to religion that we owe tragedy. We owe it to religion not merely because the Greek tragedy was in form a religious ceremonial, but in the more genuine sense that the motive of tragedy could never have taken shape in the human mind, unless the conception of a God of Wisdom had preceded it. For what lies at the root of the tragic drama is the difficulty—or impossibility—of reconciling the prevalence of undeserved calamity with the belief in the moral government of the universe which is involved in this conception of God. When our estimate of religion is still apt to be dominated by the incongruities of popular theology, it is just as well that we should sometimes recall to ourselves how great a part genuine religious thought has played in the mental development of the race. Nor has the problem ever been better stated than it is in the Book of Job, when the patriarch speaks 'in the bitterness of his soul.'

'I will say unto God, Do not condemn me; shew me wherefore Thou contendest with me.

'Is it good unto Thee that Thou shouldest oppress, that Thou shouldest despise the work of Thine hands, and shine upon the counsel of the wicked?'

To the issue thus shrewdly raised the author of this ancient

tragedy gives two answers. The first is contained in that stupendous lyric outburst in which the whole working of the universe is reviewed, and Job is bidden to correct the conclusion based upon his personal experience by the vision of the limitless resources and untiring energy of God :

‘Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?’

‘True, here in your personal experience,’ the sacred advocate argues, ‘there seems to be a failure; but look around and see how many more instances of success there are than of failure in the world at large. What right have you to complain, if, taken as a whole, you find the world well governed?’ This is the answer of the East. It is the quietism of Buddha, or the fatalism of Mohammed. The second answer is contained in the action with which the shepherd philosopher rounds off his drama :

‘The Lord gave Job twice as much as he had before.’

Here the principle of poetic justice is applied; for the human mind could not remain barren or sterile when once it was confronted by the question. It strove to find an answer, and in lieu of any better solution it acquiesced in the suggestion of a natural optimism, and accepted the reply which was in accordance with its own earnest desire.

The dominant note in the facts of life of which tragedy is a representation is, therefore, undeserved and unexplained disaster. The tragedy of real life is a disaster which cannot be justified on any principle of the current morality, nor connected with any motive known to human experience other than mere malignancy. At the same time religion bids us refer this disaster, in common with every other event, to the action of a Divine Power which it tells us is not only all-powerful, but all-wise. It is in the face of religious belief, therefore, that undeserved calamity becomes not merely undeserved, but also unexplained.

In the application of Greek genius to the problem—an application which resulted in the production of the Attic Tragedy—this simple motive has been modified. In the age of Pericles tragedy was at once a religious institution and an art. To state the problem in its bare simplicity would have been an impiety as well as an artistic blunder. The original motive—the representation of undeserved and unexplained calamity—had, therefore, to

be modified on both these grounds. The calamity of the tragic hero must not be wholly undeserved, since the gods must not be represented as acting unjustly in their dealings with men; and the tragic hero must not be wholly guiltless, since the spectacle of an entirely virtuous man overwhelmed by misfortune would be so painful that the element of giving pleasure—an element essential to a work of art—would be wholly absent from the drama. For dramatic purposes, therefore, the disasters selected must be such as were capable of being represented in the form of punishment instead of purposeless suffering; and the supreme merit of the Greek dramatists lies in the fact that they secured the tragic effect as completely as they did without violating either of the two conditions which limited their range of selection.

The manner in which they effected their purpose is worth a moment's consideration. The existence of undeserved suffering is recognised, and the impossibility of explaining it by any system of morality based upon human experience is admitted; but in the absence of any secular solution the problem is relegated to the sphere of religious belief. Religion, however, was not called upon to usurp the function of reason; it was not asked to *explain*, but to *console*. The religious motive of vicarious punishment for sin was rationalised in the doctrine of Nemesis. When the sins of the fathers are visited upon the children, a victim is required to expiate the curse. The suffering endured by this victim, although it is undeserved by him, is not purposeless, since the immunity of the race is secured by his sacrifice. Or again, when no transgression of the Divine Laws can be allowed to remain unpunished, even unconscious acts may bring down the wrath of Heaven upon the head of their author. In both these ways suffering, which could not be justified on any principle of human morality, was represented as the result of a transgression of Divine Laws imperfectly understood, but nevertheless believed to be founded on Divine Wisdom. The law of Nemesis, or Retribution for Sin, was not, therefore, an attempt to reconcile the existence of undeserved suffering with the principles of human morality, but a recognition of the fact that it is impossible to justify such events solely by reference to these principles. In other words, we are thrown back upon the postulate of a power working by means other than those which we can understand, and of a hope that what we cannot understand may somehow after all be good and not evil. Thus the central motive of tragedy, as pre-

sented by the Greek dramatists, is not merely the conflict between man and circumstances, but that aspect of this conflict which is incapable of explanation by any process of reason; and the only reconciliation of the existence of undeserved suffering with religious belief which they put forward consists in the fact that this inexplicable element in human life is referred to the action of deities, whose motives and purposes are admitted to be too profound for human understanding.¹

I have said that the supreme merit of the Attic masters lies in the fact that in spite of their limitations they succeeded in approaching the tragic ideal as closely as they did. This ideal is to represent not merely the conflict between man and circumstances—so little is this the case that this conflict, if it be successful, is the motive of Romance—not merely the unsuccessful conflict between man and circumstances; but that aspect of this unsuccessful conflict which baffles the human mind. Now this aspect is never so baffling as when the tragic disaster consists of suffering which is wholly undeserved; or, in other words, when the victim of destiny or circumstances is represented as wholly

¹ If we could believe that the doctrine of *Pathema mathema* (teaching by suffering), which was associated with the law of Nemesis, was used by the Greek dramatists to show that the spiritual capacity of human nature is developed by suffering, in the sense in which Browning employs the theory that life on earth is a training school for heaven, it would constitute a genuine attempt to reconcile undeserved suffering with the belief in the moral government of the world. But the teaching of experience intended to be illustrated by this doctrine seems rather to have been confined to such spiritual development only as was implied in the recognition of man's powerlessness to fight against the decrees of Heaven, however inscrutable they might appear. Sir Richard Jebb, in commenting upon the *Œdipus Coloneus*, writes:—

‘The gods, who have vexed Œdipus from youth to age, make this amend to him—that just before his death he is recognised by men as a mysteriously sacred person, who has the power to bequeath a blessing and a malison. They further provide that his departure out of his wretched life shall be painless, and such as to distinguish him from other men. But their attitude towards him is not that of a Providence which chastens men in love, for their good. They are the inscrutable powers who have had their will of a mortal. If such honour as they concede to him at the last is indeed the completion of a kindly purpose, it is announced only as the end of an arbitrary doom. If it is the crown of salutary, though bitter, education, it appears only as the final justice prescribed by a Divine sense of measure.’ (Introduction.)

Browning's attempt to justify the existence of evil in a world ruled by a God of Love by the ‘training school’ theory of earth is open, from a philosophic point of view, to the objection that if the God of Love is also All-powerful, He would be able to find some means of training the soul for immortality less painful than the infliction of undeserved calamity.

guiltless. This typical instance of supreme tragedy was excluded, as we have seen, from the Attic drama; and it was upon this practice of the Attic masters that Aristotle founded his rule, that the victim of the tragic disaster must not be absolutely flawless, but marked by some moral blemish such as Agamemnon's 'insolence,' or some unconscious transgression such as that which Œdipus committed, in order to soften the feeling of moral revolt in the minds of the audience. Nevertheless, short of this, the greatest triumphs of the Greek tragedy were won by the presentation of undeserved and unexplained suffering; and we have only to read these dramas to be assured that the Attic dramatists knew, not only that the master-power of tragedy lies in the fact that it is an attempt to approach the problem of the origin of evil, but also that the tragic interest is most intense when this problem is presented as being what it really is—insoluble.

To pretend, as some modern critics have done, that Æschylus intended to represent the death of Agamemmon at the hands of Clytæmnestra and her paramour, Ægisthus, as a punishment for sin which could be justified by any system of morality, is to insult alike the morality of the poet and the intelligence of the audience. Regarded as punishment, the disaster was not only wholly disproportionate to the fault, but it was vindictive and not corrective. Still less could the moral degradation and physical suffering of Œdipus be put forward by any sane intellect as a just retribution for a violation of moral laws for which Œdipus could in no sense be held responsible. In both these typical instances it was the want of explanation, the utter disproportion of the punishment to the fault, the wonder created by the thought that these great men should have been overwhelmed by the powers of evil on such slight provocation, that united to produce the allied emotions of 'fear and pity' in the minds of the audience, and thereby made the tragedy.

The lyrical element of the Greek tragedy affords a means of ascertaining with some definiteness what the purpose of the poet was; since the comments of the chorus expressed the emotion which he desired the action represented on the stage to produce in the minds of the audience. What, then, is the effect produced upon the chorus—and therefore, presumably, the effect which Æschylus intended to be produced upon the audience—by the speech in which Clytæmnestra attempts to represent her deed as morally justified by Agamemnon's conduct towards her? It is a

feeling of horror; the appeal to the principles of human justice is instantly rejected, and the disaster is referred to the 'hand of Jove.'

'And dost thou glory in these deeds of death,
This vengeance of the Fury? . . .
Ah! 't is a higher power
That thus ordains: we see the hand of Jove,
Whose will directs the fate of mortal man.
My king, my royal lord, what words can show
My grief, my reverence for thy princely virtues!
Art thou thus fall'n, caught in a cobweb snare,
By impious murder breathing out thy life?
Art thou thus fall'n—ah! the disloyal bed—
Secretly slaughtered by a treach'rous hand?'¹

Or again, to turn from Æschylus to Sophocles, when the catastrophe is impending over Œdipus we find that the chorus take refuge in an expression of blind reverence for the ordinances of Heaven, whose operation they do not pretend to understand.

'Oh! that my lot may lead me in the path of holy innocence of word and deed, the path which august laws ordain, laws that in the highest empyrean had their birth, of which Heaven is the father alone, neither did the race of mortal men beget them, nor shall oblivion ever put them to sleep. The power of God is mighty in them, and groweth not old.'²

Here the sense of impending doom creates a feeling of religious awe which verges on superstition.

But after Œdipus has rushed into the palace, crying 'All brought to pass—all true! Thou light, may I now look my last on thee—I who have been found accursed in birth, accursed in wedlock, accursed in the shedding of blood!' they read the meaning of the drama thus:—

'Alas, ye generations of men, how mere a shadow do I count your life! Where, where is the mortal who wins more of happiness than just the seeming, and, after the semblance, a falling away? Thine is a fate that warns me—thine, thine, unhappy Œdipus—to call no earthly creature blest.'

And when Œdipus is being 'led hence' the audience is dismissed from the spectacle of his moral and physical ruin with a pitiful admission of the baffling mystery of human life.

'Dwellers in our native Thebes, behold, this is Œdipus, who knew the famed riddle, and was a man most mighty; on whose

¹ Translated by Robert Potter.

² As translated by Matthew Arnold.

fortunes what citizen did not gaze with envy? Behold into what a stormy sea of dread trouble he hath come!

'Therefore, while our eyes wait to see the destined final day, we must call no one happy who is of mortal race, until he hath crossed life's border free from pain.'¹

These, surely, are words which cannot by any conceivable stretch of the imagination be held to show that Sophocles thought that he had placed before his audience an example of how the facts of existence can be reconciled with a belief in the moral government of the world. If *Œdipus* was not safe, he says in effect, no man on earth can be. He does not attempt to reconcile; it is not his business to explain the mystery. What he desired to achieve was an artistic effect—the proper effect to tragedy. He has produced a feeling of pity by showing that the calamity of the hero was—apart from his unconscious transgression—undeserved, and a feeling of fear by showing that neither virtue nor wisdom can secure immunity from misfortune. In other words, the tragic effect is directly due to the fact that the mystery of evil is represented as insoluble.

But so far is this theory of 'reconciliation' carried that Mr. W. L. Courtney writes:²

'If this were indeed all, if Sophocles had contented himself with painting so unrelieved a tragedy as this, we might well call him the worst of cynics and pessimists, because he made not the guilty but the innocent suffer. But the second play in the trilogy, "*Œdipus at Colonus*," is a singularly sweet and quiet picture of an old man's growing peace and contentment.'

Would it be conceived that the *dénouement* of the play of which this account is given is preceded by one of the most terrible scenes in literature—a scene in which *Œdipus* passionately upbraids his son Polyneices, and calls down awful imprecations upon his head? And it is after this terrible scene that the audience are led to feel that the only peace for *Œdipus* is the peace of death:

'Hear me, O Death, son of Earth and Tartarus! . . . To thee I call, giver of the eternal sleep.'

While the general lesson of the drama is presented in these

¹ This and the two preceding passages are taken from Sir Richard Jebb's translation.

² In his recently published *Idea of Tragedy*, p. 32.

words of the chorus, which are spoken after Œdipus has asserted his moral innocence in reply to the charges of Creon :

‘The long days lay up full many things nearer unto grief than joy . . . and the Deliverer makes an end for all alike . . . even Death at the last.

‘Not to be born is, past all prizing, best ; but, when a man hath seen the light, this is next best by far, that with all speed he should go thither, whence he hath come.’¹

The long supremacy of the literature and art of ancient Greece has produced this curious result. Because the Greek dramatists were prevented by the limitations of the Greek drama from representing the true ideal of tragic action—an entirely virtuous person overwhelmed by undeserved and therefore unexplained calamity—the critics have assumed that no dramatist could make the representation of entirely undeserved suffering the motive of his tragedy. Not only so, but when they have been confronted with tragedies in which this motive is employed, they have invented theories to bring them, as they thought, into line with the practice of the Attic masters. The deficiency of the critical theory which finds the essence of tragedy to consist in the mere conflict between man and circumstances, and not in that aspect of this conflict which baffles the human mind, and which seeks to find, therefore, a ‘reconciliation’ between the facts of life and the belief in the moral government of the world, is most apparent when it is applied to those plays of Shakespeare in which the tragic ideal is completely attained. I have already referred to Mr. Courtney’s *Idea of Tragedy*, and it will be convenient to take what he has written of the tragic motives embodied in Shakespeare’s plays as a contemporary example of a misconception which seems to have impregnated the current of critical thought since the time of Aristotle.

In the second of the three lectures which together compose the volume Mr. Courtney gives us a general account of Shakespeare’s method and motives which is enriched by much suggestive and illuminating comment. In the course of this account he finds that with Shakespeare, destiny, the force in conflict with man’s will, is nothing else than a man’s own character inherited or acquired. ‘Shakespeare,’ he writes, with reference to the tragedies as distinct from the historical dramas, ‘will give you another series of portraits in which destiny is no longer either

¹ Jebb’s translation.

social or political environment, but wears the face or form of a man's own character, either inherited or acquired.'¹ And again: 'But if we ask what this fate or destiny was in the conception of our English dramatist, there is only one answer. Destiny is nothing but the man's character—not an external but an internal agency.'² That is to say, Shakespeare makes his tragedies afford a practical reconciliation of the conflict between destiny and the individual will, since no disaster which destiny or fate holds in store can be undeserved when each one makes his own destiny, and is, therefore, himself responsible for the good or evil in his life.

In applying this theory of reconciliation to the most tragic of the Shakespearian tragedies, Mr. Courtney has to show that the cruel fate which overcame Cordelia was intended by Shakespeare to convey the impression of the spiritual triumph of the victim. He writes, therefore: 'Human virtue may often go down before the assaults of evil—Desdemona is ensnared in the webs spun by Iago—but, nevertheless, it is its own exceeding great reward; and the dead Cordelia in King Lear's arms triumphantly explains that self-devotion, whether it succeeds or fails, is the highest of mortal excellencies.'³ Previously he has written: 'You can extract from Shakespeare's plays a great justification of the ways of Providence to men. Ask, for instance, whether our moral conscience is satisfied in his treatment of the human drama, and there can only be an affirmative reply. . . . The real pessimism is the despair of human virtue, and that Shakespeare never so much as suggests.'

But if Cordelia was possessed, as she undoubtedly was, of this 'highest of mortal excellencies,' and if further the good or evil of Cordelia's destiny was nothing else than the result of her own character, what becomes of the reconciliation between destiny and the individual will—a reconciliation effected by showing that destiny is an *internal* and not an external force? If character makes destiny, Cordelia's character should have caused her to pass her days in the enjoyment of the most perfect kindness on the part of her father and sisters. But the destiny which Shakespeare assigns to her is to be misunderstood, disowned, and spurned by her father, and done to death in the most cruel and malignant manner by her sisters. What meaning has the expression 'spiritual triumph' as applied to such a destiny? The foundation of all morality is the connection between right action and happiness; but when

P. 52.

² P. 86.³ P. 68.

right action is represented as leading to such misery as that of Cordelia, how are we to find in the spectacle of it 'a great justification of the ways of Providence to men?'

If this was Shakespeare's intention he would certainly merit the title of 'pessimist.' For what had Cordelia, whose 'love was more richer than her tongue,' done to bring upon herself so cruel a destiny? Or how did Desdemona, who 'would not do such a wrong for the whole world,' qualify for the harlot's death which destiny awarded her? Or how could the passionate love of Romeo, or the stern integrity of Hamlet, be deemed accountable for the malignity of the fates by which they were respectively cut off? To say, as Mr. Courtney does, that 'the dead Cordelia in King Lear's arms triumphantly explains . . . ' is to make Shakespeare, the dramatic artist, ignorant of the means by which his effect has been obtained. Shakespeare never explained nor justified the ways of Providence to men. When he wished to realise the tragic ideal in its highest form, he presented disasters which are directly at variance with the belief that man makes, or can make, his own destiny. When he gives the most forcible and the most real presentation of a tragedy, he lets us see his characters fall victims to these undeserved disasters which cannot be accounted for by any process of human reasoning, and which cannot be justified by any principles of human morality. Such disasters cannot be harmonised with the cherished belief in the existence of an All-ruling Providence 'that shapes our ends, rough-hew them as we will,' any more than they can be reconciled with the optimistic opinion that man is the architect of his own fortune. Shakespeare did not make it his business to dispute either the opinion of the man of the world or the deep-rooted sentiment of religious belief. But he saw that it was precisely in the representation of these undeserved and unexplained disasters, which seem to reveal the existence of an unseen power for evil, that the tragic ideal consists. Sometimes—not often, but often enough—these unaccountable events mar the lives of the men and women whom we know; and therefore Shakespeare represented them as happening in his imagined pictures of human life. But he used them frugally, knowing well that when he did, then, and then only, did he render a tragedy in its essence. In *Romeo and Juliet*, *Hamlet*, *Othello*, and *King Lear*, we have the spectacle of the lives of men and women, whose characters are absolutely unstained by any moral blemish, blasted by overwhelming disaster. The genius of Shakespeare, nurtured

in the frank and fearless atmosphere of the Elizabethan age, had carried tragedy beyond the limit observed by the Attic masters and formulated by Aristotle into a critical rule. This was an advance worthy alike of the poet and his age.

And so, while the Attic tragedians, as Aristotle noted, feared to give a spectacle of 'totally unmerited misfortune,' Shakespeare had the courage to present the problem in its naked reality; and the masters of prose fiction in the nineteenth century have followed his example. One instance will suffice. It is taken from the works of the great master of prose fiction who has (to use his own expression) striven to 'give a flavour of the modern day reviving that of our Poet.' Can it be supposed that the death of Lucy Feverel, as presented by Mr. Meredith, is intended to 'justify the ways of Providence to men'? If we apply the tests of human morality to this event, can any answer be found to the question why Lucy—the innocent and injured wife—whose 'last hold of reason was a thought for Richard,' should have been taken by death, when Richard and all who 'helped to destroy her' were spared? It is because her fate is undeserved and unexplained that it, like Cordelia's, affords an example of the complete attainment of the tragic ideal.

In conclusion, let me add a word in explanation of my remark that we owe tragedy to religion. I mean, that the peculiar smart which follows the presentation of undeserved and unexplained suffering—the feeling of moral revolt in the production of which tragedy manifests its special power—would be less keen if we could dismiss from our minds all thought of the moral government of the world by a Divine Providence, and adopt the materialist standpoint. From this point of view we can recognise that the life of man is subject to the action of a blind momentum, or Chance; and that Chance affects us in two ways, sometimes bringing unexpected and unmerited good, sometimes undeserved and unexplained evil. It is characteristic of human nature, however, that the unexpected good should be taken for granted, as we say, but that the unexpected evil should be resented and bewailed. The poet, in holding up the mirror to life, observes that both of these effects of chance are reflected in it; and in the general picture of life which he presents in Epic, in the non-tragic drama, and in prose fiction, he represents the good and evil as alternate. In the tragedy, on the other hand, he presents the single effect of chance which results in undeserved and unexplained evil; while

in the romance he shows the opposite effect alone, and paints in rosy hues the triumphs of the individual over circumstance when he is aided by good fortune.

Just as in the physical world the customary alternations of sunshine and cloud are broken by periods of more acute atmospheric disturbance, when the lightnings play and the thunders roll, so the ever-changing course of human existence is punctuated by seasons of sudden and overwhelming disaster. From the time of Job downwards the wisest of mankind have endeavoured to trace the origin of these disasters, and, by inventing theories to connect them with the moral principles elsewhere observed in the direction of human affairs, to harmonise the existence of undeserved calamity with the conception of an All-wise and All-powerful Ruler of the Universe. The mirror which the poet holds up to life reflects man's action alike in the sunshine of prosperity and in the shadow of adversity, and in the pictures of life presented by creative literature in general the law of beauty, no less than the experience of the race, requires that the sunlight shall prevail over the shadow. But tragedy is the one form of poetry to which the doctrine of poetic justice cannot by the nature of things apply; since the artistic presentation of human suffering in its most acute form is its central motive, and the action which it portrays is admittedly outside the range of average human experience. The thunderstorms of life are its special subjects; and the tragic poet, in his portrayal of these seasons of disaster, makes the supreme effort by which alone the tragic ideal can be attained when he admits that he is unable to explain either their origin or their purpose.

W. BASIL WORSFOLD.

A HOUSE OF DREAMS.

It was a fine afternoon, and the gates of Moor Hall Asylum were set open for the flock of mad gentlemen to pass out for their accustomed airing. Only the 'safe' cases were allowed on the highroad; those others who were violent remained in padded chambers or special yards of exercise: but the present narrative does not concern them. In attendance on the flock of mad gentlemen were two stalwart keepers, who walked behind and communed one with another on matters of personal interest, while the flock straggled on after their manner—some shuffling on with hurried, irregular gait, as if to get over the calculated distance as rapidly as possible; a few strutting consequentially and smiling an evil smile into the faces of the passers-by; one man walking alone, his eyes on the ground, his head sunk on his breast.

The walk was always the same—down the hill, across the hollow where the brook ran, up the rise beyond, past the lightning-blasted tree, to where the road divided at the corner of the wood. The sun shone warmly, the air was balmy, the trees were beginning to put on their suits of spring—except the one which had been seared, and would put forth leaf no more. At the corner of the wood a log lay on the roadside, and on this the downcast man seated himself, and let the rest of the procession straggle by.

'Won't you get up, Mr. Brunton? We are going further on.

'No. I will wait here, and join you coming back. You may trust me.'

The warder made no objection; this was a 'safe' case, and he knew his man. So the shepherds went on, with the flock in front; and the downcast man was left sitting in the sunshine, his arms on his knees and his long, inert hands hanging open, the fingers pointing to the ground.

The sunshine warmed him; the solitude was a boon; the rest welcome, for he was very weary—not with the walk, for the flock had barely traversed a mile beyond those guarded gates; an expedition of the night before had worn out his strength and left him a wreck. The necessity of these midnight errands had been laid upon him as a grievous burden. This alone obliged his

residence at Moor Hall and subjected him to the companionship he endured there. The authorities were cognisant, though silent. He broke no rule, though such liberty was allowed to no other inmate. So long as the necessity bound him, it was, he told himself, a matter of convenience that he should reside at the Asylum and submit to its regulations in all else; when it came to an end he would go back to his place in the world, which was his to resume at will.

When it came to an end! But would it ever end, except with his life? It had already lasted—how long? The years made him giddy in retrospect; he could not count them. It was a penance for wrongdoing, though the wrong was not wholly his; it had been a mistake—no more than a mistake—but sometimes a mistake is visited more heavily than a crime. He was often at a loss to remember how it arose, it was all so long ago; at a loss in the daylight and the sunshine: in the night all was clear. It was odd how daylight confused things; the very way looked different which was plain under the stars, though his feet must have worn a track by now, going to and fro over the moorland to that hollow among the hills—the road on which they were sent forth for exercise trended to the south-east. He could barely see the northward direction of his nocturnal pilgrimage, though he raised his head and stood up to look, mounting on the log. But just then one of the shepherds glanced down the long slope of road and saw him so standing; and directly he knew himself observed, he stepped down and resumed his seat as before. The authorities were aware; that was enough; he would give this man no clue. He sat down again, and drooped his head and hands as before, falling, in that sun-warmth, into a torpor of body and mind together—weary body and perplexed mind—sitting so still that the small wood-creatures took courage to creep out and look at him, and presently to frisk in his vicinity, regarding him not at all; the white tails of the rabbits whisking in and out of sandy burrows in the hedge-bank, the red-bodied squirrels springing in the branches overhead.

There was no conscious effort of mind in that torpor, and yet it seemed to beget a conclusion. It was through incompleteness of nature that he was helpless under his burden. Succour must come from without, if it came at all. The incompleteness must be made whole before he could break that yoke and stand up free. He was only half a soul, and needed the complement to be strong.

Were all men only half souls, and did they know it? Was his case unique, or was he the only one aware?

Tramp, tramp; the flock was returning shepherded, and the vanguard had already straggled by. 'Now, Mr. Brunton, sir,' from one of the men in charge, and he was bound to rise and be driven with the rest. Past the blasted tree, through the hollow where the brook ran, up the hill beyond, where the guarded gates would be set open. No object attained, no desire gratified, no hope or home-coming in return. And yet before the Asylum portals opened and swallowed him up, a slight, unusual incident did occur which concerned the downcast man; and where life is one dead level of monotony, even a slight incident may be of mark.

The mad gentlemen and the mad ladies went for their daily airings in separate droves, separately attended and differently timed. It was not even customary for them to encounter; but if they did so, Asylum etiquette dictated that the gentlemen should stand aside and suffer the ladies to pass unaccosted. It was not customary for the downcast man to notice them at all. He regarded the other inmates—there for obvious reasons of downright insanity, widely separated from his own case—with the generalisation of contempt. And the lady inmates had always been obnoxious to his fastidious taste. Many of them were personally ill-favoured; all were ill-dressed, in garments possibly supplied by outside relatives who thought anything good enough for wits astray. Most of those in the drove were elderly, but with them was one young girl—an exception only in her youth, for her gown was a large check pattern—and he hated checks—and she was muffled in a shapeless cloth cloak, over-heavy for the time of year. It was this young girl who stepped out of the rank and stopped in front of him, holding out a flower for his acceptance. It was a white rose-bud. Some one had given it to her, out of pity probably; and she, in her compassion, would offer it to him.

His head was bowed so low that at first he only saw the flower and her hand holding it. Then he looked up in her face. It was hardly a pretty face—very thin, with a hectic spot on each cheek-bone; but the eyes shone like two stars into his as he took the rose, and they were, he thought, the eyes of an angel. He was too startled to say anything, even in thanks. She did not speak, though her action was eloquent enough. She was at once swept on with the others, and, as he divined, would suffer rebuke.

He went on to the house, holding the rose. He looked at it once, but would not give it further open notice, for the flock were tittering and jeering. That they should jeer at him mattered nothing; at her?—that touched him more nearly. In the room which he was suffered to call his own, he filled a glass with water, and set the flower in it with anxious care. It was only a bud; it might expand—live; he must not let it fade. It seemed to stand to him in the place of hope; and when he looked at it he saw again the girl's eyes. Strange! it was impossible she could have known, and yet she looked at him as if she knew. No eyes had ever looked like that before. There was no boldness in the accost. Not the coarsest of men could have misconstrued her meaning. It was just that her soul looked into his, straight into the incompleteness and the need which had been shut from all others. His angel of pity! He drew a chair to the table and sat down beside the flower.

The burden of necessity did not draw him across the moor that night, nor those immediately following. There would sometimes be such an interval, and then for a while every recurring midnight would witness the journey. Next day was wet, and the flock remained indoors. With Saturday the weather was fine again, and they were driven out as usual. But the downcast man went with a purpose in his mind; and by a well-timed stumble and an assumed limp he contrived to delay return, so that they again encountered the women's detachment in the act of sallying forth. He scanned the unlovely ranks eagerly, though furtively, for a certain check gown. Yes, the angel of pity was there. She would pass him; he might look her in the eyes again; perhaps this time she would speak.

Alas for the chance of spirits touching! A female warder in nurse's attire hovered over the passing rank, and took her place by the check gown, doubtless of intention; drawing the girl's arm through hers, and interposing the breadth of her person between the downcast man and his angel. The irregularity of the former day had been noted, and discipline must be maintained; a repetition could not be allowed.

It was not a blessing on her vigilance that the downcast man ground between his teeth as he went on with the flock, and again as he shut himself into his room. The rose was still in water; it had expanded from bud to full bloom, and now the loosened petals fell apart and fluttered down from the calyx with that jar

of the shutting door. It is in the nature of flowers to fall, but the downcast man groaned over the ruin. Presently he gathered up the frail petals one by one into a sheet of paper, and, opening a private drawer, laid them carefully within.

Moor Hall Asylum, private asylum though it be, is an establishment sufficiently large to have a chapel of its own, and to retain a chaplain for those Sunday services which all 'safe' cases among the patients are supposed to attend. There is, however, no absolute compulsion about this religious exercise, and in the eight years of his residence Mr. Brunton's attendances had been few. But on this particular Sunday he fell into the procession, neatly brushed and attired, as if his appearance there were a matter of course. The male patients entered by one door, the female patients by another; and the women were usually first in place on their separate side of the middle aisle. Mr. Brunton lifted that bent head of his for a rapid survey before he selected his place—at the nearer end of a seat in the opposite parallel immediately behind a certain check gown. The position was good for the observation he intended; but the girl showed no consciousness of his presence. She never looked behind her; her gaze was fixed on the coloured glass and tracery of the east window, except when it dropped to her book in finding place or turning leaf. Her hands were thin and delicate; her hair was smoothly ordered and pleased his eye, though her bonnet was of coarse straw, and her gown detestable. That thick cloak was still huddled about her; once she put up her hands to undo the clasp and push it back for air after a paroxysm of coughing; for she had an awful cough—hollow, and yet with a sharpness in it as if it pierced to the life.

She seemed to breathe more easily when the cloak was loosened, and the convulsion did not recur till the preacher was in full tide with his sermon—a lifeless discourse, gabbled to deaf ears. Then her shoulders heaved and her head bent with the return. He saw her put her handkerchief to her mouth as if to smother it—saw her draw it away dyed scarlet—saw her head fall back.

He was first at her side. She was lifted in his arms before anyone else could reach her or say him nay. 'I will carry her for you. Tell me where,' he said to the woman warder. His manner was composed and authoritative; the timely help so

needful, that he was suffered to have his way. She was hardly heavier than a child; and she looked as if dead already—the wonderful eyes shut, the thin cheek lying against his breast. He carried her into the women's quarter and laid her down on a couch, while a nurse busied herself with vinegar and restoratives. The doctor had been hastily summoned; and when he had done what he could, he linked his arm in the downcast man's to lead him away.

'Come, Brunton,' he said. 'We are much obliged to you, but there is no more to be done. She may linger, poor little thing, but the end cannot be far off now. She has broken a blood-vessel before. The matter? Oh, consumption—not a doubt of it. And in an advanced stage.'

That night the summons came to Brunton—the compulsion of mysterious necessity under which he lay. He got up, huddling on his clothes, and went out into the wide corridor where a light was burning, straight to the main door so carefully barred and bolted overnight, but which for these expeditions was always open and unwatched—'by order of the authorities,' as the downcast man believed. The sky was clear and starlit, the way familiar; there was light enough to discern it, though the new moon had dipped under, following in the wake of the sun. How still it all was, how absolutely solitary that wide upland, the sweep of an owl's wing above it the only sign of life. It might be miles remote from any dwelling but the one; what the actual distance was he could not tell, but it never took him long to come and go. And that was Kingston Brook running down into the valley he sought—a veritable Sleepy Hollow, guarded about by swelling hills; the very same Kingston Brook which the flock were accustomed to cross in their daily promenade, whose brown waters he was wont to watch, knowing they ran down from common life to the threshold of the House of Dreams.

The house to which he was bidden stood just above the brook and under the hill, a dark pile of gabled stone hung about with ivy; not large, but with a tower on one side surmounted by a room like a lantern, for what bygone purpose built in past years matters not, as the present is alone in question. Only those who are in the habit of night-walking, and have trained their eyes to see in these conditions, can properly appreciate the various shades and densities of darkness. There is the remote dark of the clear sky, the darkness of the landscape, which has gradations of

atmosphere, and, in contrast to these, the different and denser blackness of a building near at hand. Such was the outline of the house to Brunton's view as he stood regarding it, the shiver of repulsion mingled with another feeling which was new. *What* was the behest that he obeyed? Was there no possibility of resistance? What hindered him from turning his back on the ordeal, from putting a term to his suffering by the force of his own will, from declaring and maintaining himself free? He stood arrested, but it seemed his strength sufficed only for the pause; he could not turn away.

His eyes were drawn irresistibly to the summit of the dark tower, to the four-sided lantern room he knew, but could not distinguish. And as he looked there came within it the faint glow of a light, white like moonlight, not yellow as of fire or candle, barely perceptible at first, but continuing and brightening while he watched. And then another lower window in the dark house brightened also, and a shadow passed before it, moving on the blind. It was too late; he must go on: he had sinned and he must atone; the incomplete soul had in itself no power to deliver. But as he walked forward there came for a moment the sensation of a weight in his arms, as if he carried again the sick girl, and her white face lay against his breast. But the fancy did not abide; it came and went; his arms were empty and he knew himself alone.

He was expected; the door opened as he approached; an old woman of evil countenance, bowed with age and grumbling to herself, acted as portress. She closed it again behind him, and preceded him up the stair as far as the first floor, where an open door showed light within—the light which had shone from the lower window. She entered here, and closed it with scant ceremony, leaving him alone upon the stair; but, in the glimpse of an instant, he thought he saw beyond her the skirt of a checked gown, the ugly check he well remembered and associated with the sick girl.

It was impossible she could be here, he told himself; it would never be allowed by the authorities, though permitted in his own case, which had been exceptional throughout. And was she not lying ill, away there at the Asylum? He checked the impulse to follow the old crone and find her; his way led up the stair, to the lonely lantern room in the height of the tower—a square room, glass sided, with lattices set open east and

west, north and south, to the four winds of heaven; a room with a curious domed roof, now closed, but ringed about with a brazen circle which may once have mounted a telescope. Below this circle was placed a table of massive oak, bearing a huge bowl of brass, inscribed with strange characters within and without, and on the wide flat rim. There was a chair on the north side of this torture chamber, the torture chamber of the House of Dreams, and nothing else but the white light which cast no shadow, and proceeded from no fixed point. Outside the uncurtained windows utter darkness, and the moan of the rising wind.

Brunton knew what to expect; constant repetition had rendered the whole thing familiar; there was nothing strange to him in what he saw. He dropped into the chair, gripping its carved elbows with both hands as he waited, his head bowed on his chest.

He had not to wait long. The wind sighed through the room, and, as if with the breath of it, the brazen circle and the brazen vessel began to ring with a high sustained note. It was such a note as the finger dipped in water may draw from a glass bowl, if passed rapidly along its edge; but of infinitely greater volume and incalculable duration, sweet at first, but becoming momentarily intolerable. It seemed to the man who listened and was tortured by it—as such a sustained note can torture the ear, and the soul through the ear—that it must typify the persistence of the Ego; but this no doubt was the fancy of a brain astray. Other sounds arose, ringing in the bowl, but this was the key-note, dominant through all: sounds of lamentation and curses, wrath and woe and wrong, meaningless no doubt to another, but intelligible to the listener in the chair.

The sweat stood in beads on his forehead; he writhed as if in physical torment, his eyes cast down, his hands tightly gripped. And then there came a change; he did not cease to listen, but he was compelled also to look. There began to rise from the brazen vessel eddies of hot air, or an appearance that resembled it; a presentation of flux and reflux without the density of matter. And in this forms swam before him, faces that looked and passed, shadowy scenes suggested by the voices that cursed him and cried; and through all rang the dominant note. Would it ring in his ears for ever? Would no torture of his atone? In all this world of torment was there none to deliver?

The faces faded out of the quiver of hot air; another appear-

ance began to rise in the witch cauldron. It was only a green leaf, a delicate stem, a white bud; he had seen such a bud before, but it had been doomed to fade. And as he watched, the bud expanded to the perfect flower, the open calyx relaxed, a shower of delicate petals fell back into the bowl. And with their touch the ringing note and the cursing voices ceased, and there was a great silence.

The man sprang up with a cry which pierced the sudden stillness like a sword. Was he this time to be released so soon? Were there no worse torments to come after? It was even so; he found himself unhindered; the light had paled already to a glimmer. He groped his way back to the stair—to the outer door—to the free air, and fled along the moorland path, leaving the House of Dreams lying dark under the stars.

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‘Are you ready, Mr. Brunton, sir? The gentlemen are walking out.’

He was utterly exhausted; the ordeal always left him so; but the habit of discipline was strong, and he rose to his feet at the implied order. But his submission was interrupted; another person pushed past the attendant, and dismissed him with a wave of authority. It was the assistant doctor, who had been called to the sick girl.

‘Mr. Brunton will not walk this morning, Davis. I have something to say to him.’

The downcast man motioned his visitor to a seat, with the old courteous habit not quite forgotten; but the doctor looked keenly at the haggard face and hollow eyes, as if to divine how far his errand might be comprehended.

‘You remember yesterday in chapel, the girl who fainted, and you carried her out—who broke a vessel on the lungs?’

Yes, the downcast man remembered, that was plain. Reason and purpose were in the eyes that met the doctor’s. ‘What of her?’ he tried to ask, with throat suddenly constricted.

‘You did not know her, I think, before? No, of course not; she says not as well; but she wants to speak to you. It is nearly all over, and we don’t like to cross her just at the last. If she has any delusions they are harmless ones; and you will bear with her.’

‘Most certainly. She wishes to see me. When?’

'Now, if you are willing. There is no time to be lost. I will take you to the women's quarter.'

The separating distance was quickly crossed. The sick ward was cheerful and airy, with only the one bed in occupation. The girl looked frail as her fallen rose-leaves, lying propped with pillows to ease the difficult breath. The doctor set a chair and left Brunton beside her, calling the nurse away out of hearing to the end of the long room. The lump in the downcast man's throat had come back, and he was at a loss what to say to her. But she did not wait for him to speak. She put out her thin hand with a smile.

'You have been kind to come to me,' she whispered.

He took the hand in both his. 'It is you who are kind,' he said. 'You were sorry for me: you gave me a flower. I think you know!'

'I know,' she said. 'I want to tell you. I have been puzzled a long while, and darkened, like the rest; but now, because the end is coming so close, all is growing clear, and I see.'

'You know—you see! Your eyes told me so before ever you spoke.'

'It will have been worth it all—the broken life, the sorrow and pain—if for my guerdon I can set one free; if I can lift the burden from only one. Listen, my friend; come closer. There is a House of Dreams——'

'You have been there? You know it?'

'You are in bondage to it, but you will be bound no more. I have leave to free you; that is the secret I have to tell. You will be called once again, but it will be the last time. All will be changed.'

He no more doubted her than he would have doubted an angel: she was his angel, and his fetters fell from him at her touch. Faith is the miracle-worker, and his faith in her was absolute. He held her hand and was speechless.

'You will be free. You must go back into the world; you must take up Life again, and use it wisely. I cannot point out how, for I am dying. You will be shown.'

It seemed she asked an assurance, and he strove to give it.

'Wait and show me,' he pleaded. 'You can make me what you will—my white rose.'

She shook her head faintly. 'I have done all I am permitted—here and now. It will be your part to remember and believe. . . . Promise! promise! They are coming back!'

He promised on that appeal; he kissed her hands, which were both in his; and then, drawn by something in her eyes, he kissed her brow. And that was all. Delusion it might have been on her part, but to him it was truth beyond the shadow of a doubt; truth, and with power to save. The doctor and the nurse were back beside them, one on either side of the narrow bed, and he was drawn away. His white rose! and he did not even know her name!

He went back and waited. The summons would come once more, and would then be remitted for ever; she had said it, and he believed. It came on the fifth night, and he obeyed; but with this difference, that he had cast off fear like a garment. The matted corridor was deserted, with its dim lamp burning, high and guarded, through the night watch; the great door of the Asylum was free to him to come and go, as it had been hundreds of times before. And, outside, the moon had rounded from her sickle, a silver orb to light his way. The night air was fresh as balm, sighing over the waste, and cooling the forehead he bared to it. 'For the last time,' he said over and over to himself as he went, following the brook which ran below, a silver clue leading to the hollow in the hills.

He reached the brow of the descent, and there the valley slept under the moon; while in its light the House of Dreams was dark no longer, but ghost-like and grey, wearing its illuminated lantern as a crown. No withered portress was at the door with a scowl and a curse; it stood open, and the House was full of light. He went on up the stair.

'All will be changed.' Her words came back to him again on the threshold of the lantern chamber. The brazen bowl was gone, with the steam of hell-broth that rose from it; the domed roof was open to the stars. And, in place of the oak table, trestles were set east and west, and upon them the long strait shape of a coffin heaped about with flowers. He drew near in awe and wonder to look within, and there, with a smile on her dead face, lay the girl who gave him the rose.

That was the end; he remembered no more till he woke in his bed, woke and knew himself healed. The burden had fallen from him; he was renewed in the spirit of his mind. And as in former years the man made whole of leprosy went to show himself

to the priests, so this later miracle was demonstrated to the authorities who were experts—in results only, not its hidden cause—and confirmed by them sitting in judgment. So the down-cast man lifted up his head and went out into the world again, to take up, as she had bidden, and put to wiser uses, what was left to him of Life.

THEO. DOUGLAS.

THE PERSISTENCE OF YOUTH.

IN all ages and in all languages the praises of youth have been joyously or pathetically sounded. From time immemorial men have been exhorted to make the most of their youth, remembering that it would quickly pass away, and the catalogue of the ills which old age brings with it has been drawn out with dismal iteration. In a sort of half-hearted way men learned the lesson. They enjoyed themselves as much as possible when they were young, and when they were old made things as unpleasant as they could for their juniors, to revenge their own shortcomings in the joy of youth, and spent the rest of their time grumbling to one another. But it has been reserved for our practical age and for us practical Anglo-Saxons to learn the lesson in its fulness, and to draw the proper conclusion. We have determined to remain young until we die, and already the success we have achieved is remarkable. We made up our minds twenty years ago at most, and already the percentage of young men who have defied all the prosaic limitations of their ancestors is amazing. By young men I mean, of course, men who are visibly and characteristically young, who by the mere tale of years may be anything up to sixty. For some time I have diligently read the lists of new books, and looked through tables of contents in the sterner reviews, in the hope that some philosopher might be found explaining the extraordinary duration of youth in the present day. I have been disappointed in my search, and am driven to make a few poor suggestions of my own, somewhat as a man wishing to study law takes a pupil instead of a tutor: by dint of writing about the matter I may haply light upon some cause or causes other than the determination which I have mentioned and which is not sufficient in itself, since in other ages men have tried to remain young and have somehow or other failed.

But let us first review the facts. I propose to confine myself to men, because in regard to women the change has been already noted and much exaggerated, and in their case it is confused with literary and other conventions and fashions. Moreover, that branch of the subject has the danger that one's philosophical

intention might be confused with a spirit of uncouth and vulgar sarcasm, which is far from one. We will keep to men. Now, in the early part of last century a man was a man at twenty or so, a middle-aged man at thirty, and old at fifty. At the present time he is a boy up to about thirty-five, a young man up to fifty, and is hardly regarded as old until he has exceeded David's maximum of life by six or seven years.

For the first half of my statement I refer my readers to the literature of the period *passim*.

Ladies even of the most uneasy virtue
Prefer a spouse whose age is short of thirty,

says Byron. Is anybody now regarded as a confirmed bachelor on account of his age? Not, I am certain, under seventy. But one might quote for ever. Even in the middle of the century Thackeray made elaborate fun of his Paul de Florac for posing as a young man at forty. I am acquainted with a young fellow whose friends and relations are making serious efforts to wean him from dissipation and bad companions and settle him in some regular business, and he is fifty-four.

As to the second part of the statement, my readers can supply their own instances by the thousand from their observation, the newspapers, and the conversation of their friends—instances of a youthful persistence which would have amazed our grandfathers. A year ago, when the present Ministry was being re-formed, the newspapers were all commenting on the extraordinary youthfulness of Mr. Wyndham and Lord Selborne. It was thought really audacious of Lord Salisbury to give high office to these lads. They are both about forty, and Pitt and Fox were in the blaze of their reputation and influence fifteen years earlier in their lives. It is, of course, a commonplace that we are served by older politicians than was the case in past times, but the interesting thing is that the comments on Lord Selborne and Mr. Wyndham referred to their absolute, not their comparative youth, rejoiced in the vigour and capacity for receiving new ideas which their youth implied, and were inclined to be nervous about the want of caution to which it might expose them. The same thing happened in Lord Randolph Churchill's case. I well remember hearing, when he resigned the Chancellorship of the Exchequer, people complain of his boyish petulance. I well remember it, because I was in my teens myself, and was rather disturbed by

the length of time which had to elapse before I should be grown up. Lord Randolph was about forty at that time.

These instances, however, though they are properly germane to the subject, may be suspect because of the convention of politics, as of the bar, which speaks of men as young when all that is meant is that they are comparatively young at their trade. Let us take, therefore, a calling which notoriously can be and is pursued by anybody over seventeen. There is a 'dramatic critic' who is about forty-five years old and has been a dramatic critic for about twenty years, I believe. Until a very few years ago he was always referred to as a 'young gentleman.' That reminds me of Mr. Max Beerbohm (if he will not object to my mentioning it), who is twenty-eight, and whom a recent handbook describes as a 'youth.' If an author of twenty were to burst upon the world (such things have been), the critics would hardly admit that he was born.

These instances show the public tendency. They are, perhaps, partly explained by public intelligence. It takes the average person about three years to grasp a simple change in facts, if it is mentioned to him at least twice a week. Three or four years ago I was a dramatic critic for a few months, and I have still numerous acquaintances who have consulted me regularly ever since on the merits of every new play, though on every such occasion I have mentioned that I seldom go to the theatre. Suppose, then, when Mr. Wyndham was twenty-one, the average man was informed that he was a year older than when he was twenty. The average man could not grasp that fact until Mr. Wyndham was twenty-four. Accordingly, when Mr. Wyndham was forty the average man would have only advanced to the fact that he was twenty-six. Some such explanation may be brought against me when I advance my own theory that these men are called boys and youths and young gentlemen because they really are so.

I will therefore abandon these public instances and refer my readers to the host of men with whom they and I are personally acquainted, who are over forty and who are, veritably and actually, still very young men in appearance, in habits, and in conversation. You must know them. Let me describe one. He has a slight, youthful figure, dressed in the latest mode. His face is smooth and bland, adorned with an adolescent moustache. He has neat, smooth hair, growing quite low on his forehead, and showing

as little tendency to baldness as when he was sixteen. He has bright, amiable, and absolutely expressionless eyes. His habits are as simple as his face. He rises at a reasonably early hour, and after a good breakfast reads all about cricket or football, as the case may be, in the paper. He reads rather slowly, and this occupation, together with answering a few invitations to play games—he writes more slowly than he reads—takes up his time till lunch. After lunch he plays an athletic game. In the evening he may possibly go to a play, avoiding those which are suspected of having anything clever in them, or he may dance, or play a mild game of cards. If he has no such amusement, he is quite willing to talk from dinner to bed-time about the game he has played in the afternoon. This is his life in London: healthy and English. In the country there are more games and less newspapers. He never talks or listens to others talking about politics, or literature, or anything of that kind, not so much because it bores him as because he does not understand a word of it. I doubt if he was really aware until lately that anybody really cared for anything except games. The war forced him to recognise that other transactions take place in life, but I think he will soon forget it. For the moment he has slightly modified his habit of estimating all men according to their proficiency in some game or sport, but the habit will reassert itself before long. Even now he never mentions General Baden-Powell without adding that he kept goal at Charterhouse.

Such is an acquaintance of mine. Such he has been and looked for twenty years, and such he will be and look for twenty years more. On his own subject he is full of impetuosity. I have known him return to the house after a long day's fishing and say as he entered the room, 'Papers come? What's the cricket? For Heaven's sake tell me the cricket!' He has a son at the University, and I often think what an ideal parent he must have seemed to his son's schoolmasters. No nonsense about intellect, or education, or that sort of thing. If his son learned to play football skilfully the school was the best of all schools in this best of all educated countries.

If all young men of forty were like this one the explanation would be easy. Devotion to athletic games would account for it all. But I know vicious young men of forty—young men who smoke too many cigars and sit up late and play cards for high stakes, like M. le Vicomte de Florac. Thackeray was, of course, mistaken in supposing that these practices were ever peculiar to

youth. It is a lamentable fact that no age or country has universally accepted our own ideal of regular work and economical habits as the perfection of human life. But what is significant in the young men to whom I refer is that they do these things with the high spirits of youthful enjoyment, and in spite of their vices continue to look young. Dissipation in middle life used to become a habit, a necessity—not a joyous affair at all. And the middle-aged dissipators used generally to have, or affect, some more serious interest. Cæsar, for example, happened to rule the world and change its constitution. Charles Fox was a serious statesman with ideas in which he believed. Even 'Old Q.' had his side and interest in politics. Moreover, Cæsar was bald and Charles Fox was fat. But these slim, smooth-faced, bright-eyed young debauchees of forty, who neither have nor pretend to have any interest in life but their dissipation, how do they do it? I remember hearing a woman refer to one of them as 'a nice boy.' I doubted his niceness and his boyhood, but she was right in her sense. There was nothing really wicked in his dissipation: it was the exuberance of a boy; and from a civilised point of view he had no claim, except the physical, to be thought a man.

These by no means exhaust the types of young men of forty; and if one passes from extreme cases to those in which boyishness is modified, a little and at times, by the rather serious pursuit of a profession or trade, one may include in the ranks of these young men the greater number of Englishmen belonging to the comfortable classes. How many are there, for example, who profess some sport or game as by far the chief interest of their lives—and I am loth to think them all hypocrites. If they are induced to talk on any other subject at all it will be in half-ideas, loosely expressed in comprehensive slang—just, in fact, as schoolboys talk. They have the intolerance of schoolboys for ideas not traditional and familiar to themselves, and the pride of schoolboys in their own ignorance. This may sound like harsh criticism, but I mean it for praise. Youth is everything. These young men of forty—nay, of fifty and sixty—are not naturally stupid, I am sure; but they feel instinctively that brains make a man grow old, and are determined to avoid them accordingly. One merely admires their astounding success. It is conceivable, indeed, that the national distrust and contempt of intellect may not be conducive to our continuance in high place in the competition of nations. But what a pity that is! If the world would

only recognise that the accomplishment of perpetual youth is a far greater thing than the elaboration of intelligence, and, instead of taking advantage of our nobler work, seek with a whole heart to follow in our footsteps, how wise the world would be!

There is one consequence of this duration of youth over which one chuckles. The merely young in years, those who had the exclusive title of youth a few generations ago, no longer, so to speak, have the place to themselves. The young man of twenty no longer triumphs in his young-manhood over his seniors. They are all young men too. Young men of forty bar his way and elbow him aside. It is very good for him. But this odd revenge of time tends to disappear, since at twenty a man nowadays is more and more a child. The extreme youth of undergraduates strikes every older person who revisits his University. It is quite common to meet young men, as they once were, of twenty, who tell you they intend to smoke when they are thirty. Such young men are of opinion that their enjoyments must be literally confined to athletic games for the next ten years or so, and have no desire to compete with the young men twenty years their seniors.

We grow up more slowly—there is no doubt of that. But that is a little off my subject, which is not the slow development of youth, but its persistence at the same point. How is it done? I have half suggested the neglect of the intellect and the studious cultivation of stupidity, which certainly becomes more and more the quality most sympathetic to the majority of our contemporaries. Almost anything will be forgiven a man of whose stupidity our world is convinced, and our high places are always at his service. But it is possible that this may be a consequence and not a cause of our perpetual youth, or both may be consequences of a common cause. Perhaps we work less than our fathers; for it is one of the numerous facts with which nature mocks our ideals that hard work ages a man more quickly than most things. But then we are told that our fathers were more leisurely than we are. Or we drink less? True that we no longer sit over our wine like gentlemen, but prefer horrible mixtures at odd times, like bar loafers; but the doctors say that a bottle of sound wine after dinner did our fathers less harm than the casual 'drink' does ourselves. We play games more; but then our play is hard work. . . . In fine, I give the explanation up, and must be content merely to admire.

G. S. STREET.

THE TALE OF THE GREAT MUTINY.¹

BY THE REV. W. H. FITCHETT,
AUTHOR OF 'DEEDS THAT WON THE EMPIRE.'

X. DELHI: HOW THE RIDGE WAS HELD.

ALL the passion, the tragedy, and the glory of the Indian Mutiny gathers round three great sieges. We vaguely remember a hundred tales of individual adventure elsewhere on the great stage of the Mutiny; we have perhaps a still fainter and more ghostly mental image of the combats Havelock fought on the road to Lucknow, and the battles by which Campbell crushed this body of rebels or that. But it is all a mist of confused recollections, a kaleidoscope of fast-fading pictures. But who does not remember the three great sieges of the Mutiny—Cawnpore, Lucknow, Delhi? The very names are like beacon lights flaming through leagues of night!

At Cawnpore the British were besieged and destroyed, a tragedy due to Wheeler's fatal blunder in choosing the site where the British were to make their stand for life, and his failure in collecting provisions for the siege. At Lucknow, again, the British were besieged, but triumphed, becoming themselves in turn the besiegers. Success here was due to the genius of Henry Lawrence in organising the defences of the Residency, and his energy in storing supplies before the Mutiny broke out. The brave men who died behind Wheeler's ridges of earth, or in the Slaughter Ghaut at Cawnpore, showed valour as lofty and enduring as that of the men who held the Residency with such invincible courage at Lucknow. But the interval between the tragedy at Cawnpore and the triumph at Lucknow is measured by the difference between the two leaders, Wheeler and Lawrence. Both were brave men, but Lawrence was a great captain.

At Delhi the British, from the outset, were the besiegers, and nothing in British history—not the story of Sir Richard Grenville and the 'Revenge,' of the Fusileers at Albuera, or of the Guards at Inkerman—is a more kindling tale of endurance and valour

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than the story of how for months a handful of British clung to the Ridge outside Delhi, fighting daily with foes ten times more numerous than themselves, and yet besieging—or maintaining the show of besieging—the great city which was the nerve-centre and heart of the whole Mutiny.

At Cawnpore and Lucknow the British fought for existence. At Delhi they fought for empire! While the British flag flew from the Ridge at Delhi it was a symbol that the British *raj* was still undestroyed. It was a red gleaming menace of punishment to all rebels. Had that flag fallen for twenty-four hours, India, for a time at least, would have been lost to England. But it flew proudly and threateningly aloft, undestroyed by a hundred attacks, till at last Nicholson led his stormers through the Cashmere gate, and the fate of the Mutiny was sealed!

The mutineers from Meerut rode into Delhi on May 11. It was the city of the Great Mogul. It appealed by a thousand memories to both the race-pride and the fanaticism of the revolted Sepoys. Here the Mutiny found, not only a natural stronghold, but an official head, and Delhi thus became a far-seen signal of revolt to the whole of Northern India. But on June 7—or less than four weeks after Willoughby in heroic despair blew up the great magazine at Delhi—Sir Henry Barnard's microscopic army made its appearance on the Ridge, and the siege of Delhi began. It was a real stroke of military genius that thus, from the very outbreak of the Mutiny, kept a bayonet, so to speak, pointed threateningly at its heart!

And the hero of the siege of Delhi is not Barnard, or Wilson, or Baird-Smith, or Neville Chamberlain, or Nicholson—but a man who never fired a shot or struck a sword-stroke in the actual siege itself—John Lawrence. Lawrence, and not Havelock, nor Outram, nor Canning, was the true saviour of the British *raj* in India in the wild days of the Mutiny.

John Lawrence was five years younger than his gallant brother Henry, who died in the Residency at Lucknow. He had no visible gleam of the brilliancy which makes Henry Lawrence a character so attractive. Up to middle life, indeed, John Lawrence was a silent, inarticulate, rugged man, with the reputation of being a great worker, but whom nobody suspected to be a genius, and for whom nobody—least of all Lawrence himself—dreamed fame was waiting. He came of that strong-bodied, strong-brained, masterful race of which the North of Ireland is the cradle. But

England, Ireland, and Scotland all had a share in the making of John Lawrence. He was actually born in England. His father was a gallant Irish soldier, who led the forlorn hope at the storming of Seringapatam. His mother was a lineal descendant of John Knox, the Scottish reformer. And perhaps the characteristic traits of the three countries never met more happily in a single human character than in John Lawrence. In Ulster he was known amongst his schoolmates as 'English John.' At Haileybury, in England, he was looked upon as a typical Irishman.

The truth is, he was Englishman, Irishman, Scotchman all in one. He had Celtic glow and fire under a crust of Scottish silence and caution; and he added the Englishman's steady intelligence and passion for justice to Scottish hard-headedness and the generous daring of the Irish character. Or, to put the matter in a different way, in any perilous crisis he could survey the situation with the balanced judgment of an Englishman; could choose his course with the shrewd and calculating sagacity of a Scotchman; then carry it out with Irish fire and daring!

Lawrence shone as a youth neither in studies nor in games, and both as a youth and man he had a magnificent faculty for silence. By blood and genius he was a soldier. But duty was the supreme law of life for him; and at the bidding of what he deemed to be duty, he surrendered a soldier's career and entered the Indian civil service. His silent energy, his strong brain, his passion for work, his chivalrous loyalty to righteousness quickly assured him a great career. He was above the middle height, strongly built, with an eager, forward gait. His massive head gave him a sort of kingly look—the forehead broad, the eyes deep-set and grey, but with a gleam in them as of a sword-blade. The firm lips had a saddened curve; the face was ploughed deep with furrows of thought and work. His voice, when his feelings were aroused, had a singular resonance and timbre, and his whole aspect was that of silent, half-melancholy simplicity and strength.

But Lawrence was exactly the man for a great crisis. He had a kingly faculty for choosing fit instruments. He saw with perfect clearness every detail of the visible landscape; but he had also that subtler vision—which only great poets and great statesmen possess—of the tendencies and forces which underlie external facts and determine their flow. The Celtic element in him, perhaps,

gave Lawrence that rare and subtle faculty; but by virtue of his Scottish strain he was essentially a man of action. He could grasp a great purpose with a hand of steel, and hold it unshaken through all the shocks of conflict and adversity.

Lawrence, it may be added, was pre-eminently fortunate in his officers. Partly by the attraction which draws like to like, and partly by his own rare genius for choosing fit instruments, he had gathered round him a group of splendid soldiers and administrators, all in the prime of life. Nicholson, for example, was only thirty-five; Edwardes and Neville Chamberlain only thirty-seven. The general average of age, indeed, on Lawrence's staff was much below that of India in general. All the energy of youth, in brief, was in Lawrence's men; all the sagacity of ripest statesmanship was in Lawrence himself.

Lawrence's contribution to the history of the Mutiny must be compressed into a dozen sentences. In 1857 he was Chief Commissioner of the Punjaub, the 'land of the five rivers,' with a population of 20,000,000. The Punjaub was newly conquered territory; its population was the most warlike in India; its frontiers marched for 800 miles with those of Afghanistan, and the hill passes were held by wild Moslem clans always ready to storm down with clattering shield and gleaming spear on the fat, defenceless plains at their feet. In eight years, under the *régime* of the Lawrences, the Punjaub had been rendered orderly, loyal, and prosperous; while the Punjaub Frontier Force, a body of 12,000 men, which kept the mountain tribes in order, was perhaps the finest body of native troops which ever followed British officers into battle.

Then came the cataclysm of the Mutiny. As with the shock of an earthquake, British rule in Northern India seemed to crumble to the ground, and British officers who yesterday were rulers of kingdoms and cities, were to-day fugitives, or fighting in tiny and broken clusters for their lives. The Mutiny, too, cut Oude and the Punjaub off from the centre of authority at Calcutta. For weeks no whisper from the outside world reached Lawrence. He was left to keep his own head and shape his own policy.

His policy may be told almost in a sentence. He anticipated mutiny, and outpaced it. He disarmed with iron resolution and with swift decision all the Sepoy regiments whose loyalty was doubtful, and put all the forts, arsenals, treasuries, and strategic

points in the Punjaub under the guard of British bayonets. Then he organised a movable column of European troops—scanty in dimensions, but of the finest fighting quality—under the command, first, of Neville Chamberlain, and next of Nicholson; and this force stood ready to strike at any point where mutiny threatened to lift its head. In the Punjaub, that is, mutiny was anticipated, robbed of weapons and left helpless, and under the ceaseless menace of the light-footed, almost ubiquitous, movable column.

Next, having dismissed into air, as with a gesture of his hand, the army whose loyalty was tainted, Lawrence had to create another native army, with loyalty above proof. And from the wild mountain clans and the Sikhs—themselves a conquered people—Lawrence actually created a new army, nearly 50,000 strong, with which he was able to crush the very Sepoys who, under British leadership, had been the conquerors of the Punjaub!

Lawrence's genius and masterful will, too, determined the whole strategy to be employed for the suppression of the Mutiny. He settled the question that Delhi must be instantly besieged. He formed a military base for the siege at Umballa, a distance of a hundred miles, and he kept sleepless guard over that long line of communications. He fed the besieging force with supplies and munitions of every kind; reinforced it with, first, his own Frontier troops, the famous Guides and the Ghoorkas, and, later, with his own movable column. He cast into the scales against Delhi, in effect, his last coin, his last cartridge, and his last man. And in that terrible game, on which hung the fate of the British rule in India, Lawrence won! 'Through him,' wrote Lord Canning, 'Delhi fell.' And the fall of Delhi rang the knell of the Mutiny.

Once, it is true, even John Lawrence's iron courage seemed to give way, or, rather, the strain of the peril threw his cool judgment off its balance. The fate of India visibly hung on Delhi. The force on the Ridge was absurdly inadequate for its task, and Lawrence conceived the idea that, to succeed at Delhi, it would be necessary to abandon Peshawur, give up the Punjaub to Dost Mohammed, and retire across the Indus. There were three European regiments, a powerful artillery, and the best native troops locked up beyond the Indus. On the Ridge at Delhi they would decide the issue of the siege. 'If Delhi does not fall,'

Lawrence argued, 'Peshawur must go. Let us abandon the Punjaub for the sake of Delhi.'

It is still thrilling to read the sentences in which Herbert Edwardes protested against this evil policy. To abandon Peshawur, he urged, would be to fail not only at Delhi, but all over India. 'Cabul would come again!' Lawrence quoted Napoleon against Edwardes. Did not Napoleon ruin himself in 1813 by holding fast to the line of the Elbe instead of falling back to the Rhine? But Edwardes knew the Eastern mind. India is not Europe. To waver, to seem to withdraw, to consent to disaster was to be ruined. To abandon the Punjaub, Edwardes warned Lawrence, was to abandon the cause of England in the East. 'Every hand in India would be against us. Don't yield an inch of frontier! . . . If General Reid, with all the men you have sent him, cannot get into Delhi, let Delhi go. The Empire's reconquest hangs on the Punjaub.' Then he quotes Nelson against Lawrence. 'Make a stand! "Anchor, Hardy, anchor!"' The quotation was, perhaps, not very relevant; but it is curious to note how one brave spirit seems to speak to another across half a century, and give a new edge to its courage.

There can be no doubt that Edwardes showed, at this moment, not only the more heroic temper, but the sounder judgment of the two. Canning settled the dispute. 'Hold on to Peshawur to the last,' he wrote; and the question was decided. But Lawrence's momentary lapse into indecision only sets in more dazzling light his courage afterwards. It was after he had seriously meditated abandoning the Punjaub that he despatched the immortal movable column, under Nicholson, 4,200 strong, with a powerful battering-train, to Delhi, thus feeding the gallant force on the Ridge with his own best troops, and yet not giving up 'an inch of the frontier,' or abating one whit of his own haughty rule in the Punjaub!

General Anson, as we have seen, was commander-in-chief in India when the Mutiny broke out. He was a brave man, had fought as an ensign at Waterloo, and had seen forty-three years' bloodless service after that great battle. But his gifts were rather social than soldierly. He was a better authority on whist and horses than on questions of tactics and strategy, and he was scarcely the man to face an army in revolt. Lawrence acted as a military brain and conscience for Anson, and determined that Delhi must be attacked; though, as a matter of fact, Anson had

only three regiments of British troops, almost no artillery, and absolutely no transport at his command.

On May 16 Anson held a council of war with his five senior officers at Umballa, and the council agreed unanimously that, with the means at Anson's command, nothing could be done. It is a curious fact, showing the speed with which, from this point, events moved, that, within less than two months from the date of that council, all its members were dead—either killed in battle, or killed by mere exposure and strain! But Lawrence's views prevailed. 'Pray only reflect on the whole history of India,' he wrote to Anson. 'Where have we failed when we have acted vigorously? Where have we succeeded when guided by timid counsels?'

Anson and his advisers gave that highest proof of courage brave men can offer: they moved forward without a murmur on an adventure which they believed to be hopeless. From an orthodox military point of view it was hopeless. Only, the British empire in India has been built up by the doing of 'hopeless' things.

On May 24 Anson reached Kurnal, where his troops were to arrive four days afterwards. On the 26th Anson himself was dead, killed by cholera after only four hours' illness!

Sir Henry Barnard, who succeeded him, had been Chief of the Staff in the Crimea. He was an utter stranger to India, having landed in it only a few weeks before. He was a brave soldier, and a high-minded English gentleman; but he was, perhaps, even less of a general than Anson. His force consisted of 2,400 infantry, 600 cavalry, and 22 field guns. Barnard had to fight one fierce and bloody combat before he reached the Delhi Ridge. This took place on June 7. It was the first time the British and the mutineers had met in the shock of battle; and the Sepoys who had revolted at Meerut, and the British troops who had been so strangely held back from crushing the revolt at the moment of its outbreak, now looked grimly at each other across a narrow interval of sun-baked turf. Lord Roberts says that when, as night fell on June 6, it was known that the troops were to move forward and attack the rebel force which stood in their path to Delhi, the sick in hospital declared they would remain there no longer, and 'many quite unfit to walk insisted upon accompanying the attacking column, imploring their comrades not to mention they were ill, for fear they should not be allowed to take part in the fight!'

The rebels fought with an obstinacy unsurpassed in the whole record of the Mutiny; but British troops in such a mood as we have described were not to be stayed. The 75th carried the rebel guns at the point of the bayonet; Hope Grant with his scanty squadrons of horse swept round their left flank. The British lost less than 200 killed and wounded, the rebels lost over 1,000 men and 13 guns; and, as night fell, Barnard took possession of the famous Ridge. Then from the streets of the revolted city the crowds looked up and saw the British flag, a gleaming and fluttering menace, a stern prophecy of defeat and retribution, flying from the Flagstaff Tower.

Delhi lies on the right bank of the Jumna; and nearly six miles of massive stone wall twenty-four feet high, with a ditch twenty-five feet broad and nearly as many feet deep in front, sweep round the city, forming a bow, of which the river is the string. Napier, afterwards Lord Napier of Magdala, had employed his rare skill as an engineer in strengthening the defences of the city. The walls were knotted with bastions, mounting 114 heavy guns. Behind them was a huge fanatical population and over 40,000 revolted Sepoys, with some 60 field guns and exhaustless magazines of warlike supplies. Every week, from one revolted station after another, new waves of mutineers flowed into the city. Some 3,000 British soldiers, with a few battalions of native troops, and 22 light guns, stood perched on the Ridge to undertake the desperate feat of besieging this huge stronghold!

The historic Ridge, it may be explained, is a low hill, not quite sixty feet high, and some two miles long, running obliquely towards the city walls. Its left touches the Jumna itself, at a distance of more than two miles from the city; its right was within 1,200 yards of the hostile walls. At the middle of the Ridge stood the Flagstaff Tower. On its right extremity the Ridge overlooked the trunk road, and was surrounded by a fringe of houses and gardens, making it the weak point of the British position. The various buildings along the crest of the Ridge, Hindu Rao's house, the observatory, an old Pathan mosque, the Flagstaff Tower, &c., were held by strong pickets, each with one or more field guns. The external slope of the Ridge was covered with old buildings and enclosures, giving the enemy dangerous shelter in their attacks. The main body of the British was encamped on the reverse slope of the Ridge.

Delhi, it will be seen, was in no sense 'invested.' Supplies

and reinforcements flowed in with perfect safety on its river front throughout the whole siege. All that Barnard and his men could do was to keep the British flag flying on the Ridge, and hold their ground with obstinate, unquenchable courage, against almost daily assaults, until reinforcements reached them, and they could leap on the city.

The first reinforcement to arrive took the surprising shape of a baby! One officer alone, Tytler, of the 38th Native Infantry, had brought his wife into the camp; she was too ill to be sent to the rear, and, in a rough waggon for bedchamber, gave birth to a son, who was solemnly named 'Stanley Delhi Force.' The soldiers welcomed the infant with an odd mixture of humour and superstition. A British private was overheard to say, 'Now we shall get our reinforcements. This camp was formed to avenge the blood of innocents, and the first reinforcement sent us is a new-born infant!'

The next day the famous Guides sent by Lawrence from his Frontier Force marched into camp, three troops of cavalry and six companies of infantry, under Daly, an officer of great daring and energy. This little force had marched 580 miles in twenty days, a feat of endurance unsurpassed in Indian history. The cavalry consisted mainly of Afghans, tall, swarthy, fierce-looking. The Ghoorkas were sturdy, undersized little Highlanders, born fighters all of them, and ready to follow their commanding officer, Major Reid, on any daredevil feat to which he might lead them. The battalion numbered 490 men, and of these no fewer than 320—or three out of four—were killed or wounded during the siege. On the day of the assault (September 14) no fewer than 180 of them, who were lying sick or wounded in the hospital, volunteered for the assault, and came limping and bandaged into the ranks of their comrades, to join in the mad rush through the Cashmere Gate!

The revolted Sepoys, on their side, were full of a fierce energy quite unusual to them, and on the very first day they flung themselves in great numbers, and with great daring, on the detachment holding Hindu Rao's house. Two companies of the 60th held this post, with two guns from Scott's battery; and for half the afternoon the quick flashes, the white smoke of cannon, and the incessant rattle of musketry round the assailed post told with what fury the attack was being urged, and how stubbornly the defence was being maintained.

At last the cavalry of the newly-arrived Guides was sent at

the enemy. They rode in upon the Sepoys with magnificent courage, broke them into flying fragments, and pursued them, wounding and slaying, to the walls of the city. Their victory was brilliant, but it was dearly bought, their commander, Quentin Batty, being mortally wounded. He was little more than a lad, but was almost worshipped by his dark-faced horsemen. He had been an English public-school boy, and, Lord Roberts says, was curiously fond of quotations. Almost his last words, spoken to a friend, were, 'Good-bye! "*Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori.*" That's how it is with me, old fellow!' The victories of England are still won, as in Wellington's days, on the playing-fields of its great schools.

The Guides found in the camp a soldier of mingled yet splendid fame who had been their leader in many a gallant charge—Hodson, of Hodson's Horse. Hodson had been, rightly or wrongly, under a cloud; but the crisis of the Mutiny naturally gave to the most daring horseman and the most brilliant light cavalry leader in India a great opportunity. He was now at the head of a body of irregular horse, and one of Barnard's most trusted officers. He was tall, fair-haired, with bloodless complexion, heavy curved moustache, and keen, alert, and what someone called 'unforgiving' eyes.

When the Guides, as they rode into the camp, met Hodson, a curious scene took place. They crowded round him with wild gesticulations and deep-voiced, guttural shouts. 'They seized my bridle,' says Hodson himself, 'my dress, hands, and feet, and literally threw themselves down before the horse with tears streaming down their faces!' Hodson was the ideal leader for fierce irregulars like the Guides, a brilliant swordsman, of iron nerve, and courage as steadfast as the blade of his own sword. And with leaders like Daly, and Hodson, and Reid, and Batty, Sikhs and Ghoorkas made soldiers that might have charged through Russian Life Guards, or broken a square of Pomeranian Grenadiers!

On June 10 the Sepoys delivered another attack, in great strength, on Hindu Rao's house, which they looked upon as the key of the British position, and which was held on this day by the Ghoorkas under Reid. The Sepoys hoped that the Ghoorkas would join them, and, as they came on, instead of firing, they waved their hands, and shouted, 'Don't fire. We are not firing. We want to speak to you. Come and join us.' 'Oh, yes! we are coming,' answered the sturdy little Ghoorkas, with fierce, jesting

humour, and, running forward to within thirty yards of the Sepoys, they poured a quick and deadly fire upon them, driving them back with great slaughter. From that stage of the siege, Hindu Rao's house, perhaps the most fiercely attacked point in the British front, was held by Reid and his Ghoorikas, and a better officer or better men were not to be found on the Ridge.

The more eager spirits among the British were burning to leap on the city, and on June 12 a plan of attack was actually prepared by the engineer officers and Hodson, and approved by Barnard. The whole force was to be divided into three columns; one was to break its way through the Cashmere Gate, a second through the Lahore Gate, a third was to fling itself on the walls, and attempt an escalade—practically, the same plan by which the city was finally carried. It was a project, considering the force available for its execution, almost insane in its daring; and Barnard, though he consented to it, took no decided and methodical steps to carry it out.

It would almost seem, indeed, as if physical strain, want of sleep, and the terrible responsibility he was carrying, had affected Barnard's head. The situation might well have taxed—and overtaxed—the brain of a greater general than Barnard. The light guns of the British, firing at a distance of a thousand yards, could make no impression on the walls. Their strength was dwindling daily; that of the enemy was growing fast. And it was natural that the British temper, under such conditions, should become explosive, and that the more daring spirits were eager, in the face of any risks, to come to the sword's point with their enemies. The General's nerve was curiously shaken. Hope Grant tells how Sir Henry Barnard sent for him on the evening of the 12th:—‘He hushed me into a whisper, and asked me if I thought any person could possibly overhear us, adding, “There is treason around us.” Then he explained, “I mean to attack the town to-night.”’ Barnard's manner produced on Hope Grant's mind the impression that his brain was slightly off its balance.

At one o'clock that night the troops were suddenly paraded, ammunition served out, and leaders assigned to the three columns. But the 75th Foot had, somehow, been left at the extreme front without orders, and before they could be brought up the grey dawn was breaking, and the proposed attack had to be abandoned. Lord Roberts says that this ‘blunder’ was ‘a merciful dispensation, which saved the British from an irreparable disaster.’ That was

not Hodson's judgment. In his journal he says:—'The attack was frustrated by the fears and absolute disobedience to orders of —, the man who first lost Delhi, and has now, by his folly, prevented its being recaptured.' But Hodson was more impatient and blunt-spoken than is permissible to even a gallant soldier, and his diary reflects, perhaps, rather the condition of his liver than the deliberate judgment of his head.

On the 12th, indeed, the Sepoys themselves were attacking Flagstaff Tower with great fury, but were repelled with steady valour. On June 14 General Reed arrived in camp; he was in chief divisional command, and should at once have taken over the charge of the siege from Barnard; but a ride of 500 miles had left him little better than a physical wreck, and Barnard still remained in command.

On the 13th, 14th, and 15th there were new attacks pluckily urged by the Sepoys, and repelled with cool and stern courage by the British. 'They came on,' is Hodson's summary, 'very boldly, and got most heartily thrashed.' On the 17th the British were attacked along their whole front, and from almost every direction, and an attempt was made to construct a battery which would enfilade the Ridge. Two small columns, under Tombs and Reid, were sent out with a dash, broke up the proposed battery in brilliant style, and drove the troops that covered it in wild and bloody flight to the city walls.

Week after week the fighting went on most gallantly, and the story gleams with records of shining pluck; it rings with the clash of steel on steel; it thrills to the rattle of musketry volleys and the deeper voice of the cannon. Thus Hope Grant tells how, on the night of the 19th, from sunset till half-past eleven, he kept back, by repeated charges of squadrons of the 9th Lancers and the Guides, with the help of some field guns, an attack on the rear of the British position.

The fighting was close and furious. As Daly came up through the darkness into the fight Tombs said, 'Daly, if you don't charge, my guns are taken'; and Daly, shaking his reins, and followed by a handful of his Guides, dashed on the enemy and saved the guns. Colonel Yule, of the 9th Lancers, was killed; Daly himself was severely wounded; and the enemy, in the dark, worked round the flanks of the British guns, and two of the pieces were on the point of being taken. Hope Grant collected a few men, and rode fiercely into the enemy's ranks. His horse was shot, and,

galloping wildly into the mass of Sepoys, fell dead. Hope Grant was thus left unhorsed in the darkness, and in the midst of the enemy! His orderly, a fine, tall Sowar, who had remained loyal when his regiment mutinied, was in a moment by his side, and cried, 'Take my horse; it is your only chance of safety.' Hope Grant refused the generous offer, and, taking a firm grasp of the horse's tail, bade the Sowar drag him out of the *mêlée*. The next day Hope Grant sent for the Sowar, warmly praised his gallant conduct, and offered him a reward in money. The brave fellow drew himself up with dignity, salaamed, and said, 'No, Sahib, I will take no money.'

Seaton describes how, during that wild night combat, they watched, from the ridge above, the flashes of the guns, rending the gloom with darting points of flame, and listened to the shouts, the clash of weapons, the crackle of the musketry that marked the progress of the fight. Presently there came a sudden glare, then a roar that for a moment drowned all other sounds. One of the British limbers had blown up. The fight was going badly. Then, out of the darkness, came the cry of a human voice, 'Where is the general?' It was an officer asking reinforcements, and three companies of the 1st Fusiliers, who were standing hard by, silent and invisible in the dusk, were sent down to the fight. They moved forward at the curt word of command; presently the rolling crash of their volleys was heard; a line of red, dancing points of fire through the darkness marked their progress, and the guns were saved!

June 23 was the centenary of Plassey, and a prediction, widely spread amongst the Sepoys, announced that on that day the *raj* of the British was to end. As it happened, that particular day was also a great religious festival for the Hindus, whilst it was the day of the new moon, and so was held by Mohammedans as a fortunate day. Accordingly an attack of great fury, and maintained for eight long hours, was made on the British right. Some reinforcements, amounting to 850 men, were on the 22nd within twenty miles of Delhi, and a staff officer was despatched to hurry them on; and they actually reached the Ridge in time to take part in the final effort which drove back the enemy. Roberts says that 'no men could have fought better than did the Sepoys. They charged the Rifles, the Guides, and the Ghoorkas again and again.' But nothing could shake the cool and obstinate—the almost scornful—valour of the British.

Every available man in the camp was at the front, and when the 2nd Fusiliers and the 4th Sikhs, who formed the approaching reinforcements, came pressing on with eager speed to the crest of the Ridge, over which the battle-smoke was drifting in dense white clouds, they were at once sent into the fight, and the enemy was finally driven back with a loss of over 1,600 men. It is not easy to picture the exhaustion of the British at the close of a fight so stern and prolonged. 'When I arrived at Hindu Rao's,' wrote an eyewitness, 'I found everyone exhausted. There were the 1st Fusiliers and some Rifles all done up. I went on to the new advanced battery; it was crowded with worn-out men. The artillerymen, likewise done up, had ceased firing; another party of Rifles in a similar state in another position. 120 men of the 2nd Fusiliers, who had marched twenty-three miles that morning and had had no breakfast, were lying down exhausted. Three weak companies of Ghoorikas were out as skirmishers; but they, too, were exhausted, and the remainder were resting under a rock. The heat was terrific, and the thermometer must have been at least 140 degrees, with a hot wind blowing, and a frightful glare.' Of ten officers in the 2nd Fusileers five were struck down by *coup de soleil*.

The next day Neville Chamberlain, Lawrence's favourite officer, rode into the camp, and assumed the post of adjutant-general. On July 3 Baird-Smith reached the Ridge, and took charge of the engineering operations of the siege. On July 5 Sir Henry Barnard died, killed by the burden of a task too great for him, and Reed assumed command. He held it for less than ten days, and then passed it over to Archdale Wilson, who had shared in the discredit of Meerut, and who, though a brave man, had scanty gifts of leadership.

Twice over during those days of fierce and prolonged battle a time had been fixed for assaulting the city, and twice the plan had been spoiled by an earlier counter-attack of the enemy. Baird-Smith, on his arrival, approved of the scheme for an assault, and urged it on Reed, who hesitated over it during the brief period of his command, and then handed it over as a perplexing legacy to his successor Wilson. The proposal to leap on Delhi was finally abandoned; but Baird-Smith, the coolest brain employed in the siege, recorded long afterwards his deliberate judgment that 'if we had assaulted any time between the 4th and the 14th of July we should have carried the place.'

On July 9, an attack of great strength, and marked by great daring, was made by the enemy, and was almost lifted into success by the disloyalty of a detachment of the 9th Irregular Cavalry. They were on outpost duty, watching the trunk road. They allowed the enemy to approach the British position without giving warning, and when Hills, who commanded two guns in front of the General's mound, ran out of his tent and leaped on his horse, he found a troop of Carabineers in broken flight, sweeping past him, and the enemy almost on his guns. He shouted 'Action front'; then, to give his gunners a chance of firing, rode single-handed into the enemy's squadrons, a solitary swordsman charging a regiment! He cut down the leading man, and wounded the second; then two troopers charging him at once, he was rolled over, man and horse, and the troops swept over him. Bruised and half-dazed he struggled to his feet, picked up his sword, and was at once attacked by two of the rebel cavalry and a foot soldier. He coolly shot the first horseman riding down upon him, then catching the lance of the second in his left hand, thrust him through the body with his sword. He was instantly attacked by the third enemy, and his sword wrenched from him. Hills, on this, fell back upon first principles, and struck his opponent in the face repeatedly with his fist. But he was by this time himself exhausted, and fell. Then, exactly as his antagonist lifted his sword to slay him, Tombs, who had cut his way through the enemy, and was coming up at a gallop to help his comrade, with a clever pistol-shot from a distance of thirty paces killed the Sepoy. It was a Homeric combat, and both Tombs and Hills received the Victoria Cross. The enemy meanwhile had galloped past the guns, eager to reach the native artillery, which they hoped would ride off with them. The 9th Lancers, however, had turned out in their shirt-sleeves, and, riding fiercely home, drove off the enemy.

It is always interesting to listen to the story of a gallant deed, as told by the doer himself. The reckless valour which Lieutenant Hills showed in charging, single-handed, a column of rebel cavalry, in order to secure for his gunners a chance of opening fire, can hardly be described by a remote historian. But Hills has told the story of his own deed, and an extract from his tale, at least, is worth giving:—

I thought that by charging them I might make a commotion, and give the gun time to load, so in I went at the front rank, cut down the first fellow, slashed the next across the face as hard as I could, when two Sowars charged me. Both

their horses crashed into mine at the same moment, and, of course, both horse and myself were sent flying. We went down at such a pace that I escaped the cuts made at me, one of them giving my jacket an awful slice just below the left arm—it only, however, cut the jacket. Well, I lay quite snug until all had passed over me, and then got up and looked about for my sword. I found it full ten yards off. I had hardly got hold of it when three fellows returned, two on horse-back. The first I wounded, and dropped him from his horse. The second charged me with a lance. I put it aside, and caught him an awful gash on the head and face. I thought I had killed him. Apparently he must have clung to his horse, for he disappeared. The wounded man then came up, but got his skull split. Then came on the third man—a young, active fellow. I found myself getting very weak from want of breath, the fall from my horse having pumped me considerably, and my cloak, somehow or other, had got tightly fixed round my throat, and was actually choking me. I went, however, at the fellow and cut him on the shoulder, but some ‘kupra’ (cloth) on it apparently turned the blow. He managed to seize the hilt of my sword, and twisted it out of my hand, and then we had a hand-to-hand fight, I punching his head with my fists, and he trying to cut me, but I was too close to him. Somehow or other I fell, and then was the time, fortunately for me, that Tombs came up and shot the fellow. I was so choked by my cloak that move I could not until I got it loosened. By the by, I forgot to say that I fired at this chap twice, but the pistol snapped, and I was so enraged I drove it at the fellow's head, missing him, however.

The Sepoys had planted a battery of guns at a point in their front called Ludlow Castle, and maintained from it a constant fire on Metcalfe House. Their skirmishers, too, crept up with great audacity, and maintained a ceaseless fire on the British pickets. It was necessary to silence this battery, and early in the morning of August 12, without call of bugle or roll of drum, a force of British, Sikhs, and Ghoorkas, with a handful of cavalry, stole down the slope of the Ridge in order to carry the offending guns. The order was given for profoundest silence, and almost like a procession of shadows the little column crept over the Ridge through the gloom, and disappeared in the midst of the low-lying ground on its way to the rebel guns.

Undetected in the sheltering blackness, the column reached the sleeping battery. A startled Sepoy, who caught through the haze and shadow a sudden glimpse of stern faces and the gleam of bayonets, gave a hasty challenge. It was answered by a volley which ran like a streak of jagged flame through the darkness, and with a rush the British—their officers gallantly leading, and Sikh and Ghoorka trying to outrace their English comrades—swept on to the battery. The Sepoys succeeded in discharging two guns on their assailants; but Lord Roberts records that the discharge of the third gun was prevented by a gallant Irish soldier named Reegan. He leaped with levelled bayonet over the earthwork, and

charged the artilleryman, who was in the very act of thrusting his port-fire on to the powder in the touch-hole of the gun. Reagan was struck at on every side, but nothing stopped him, and the fierce lunge of his bayonet slew the artilleryman and prevented the discharge of the gun. Captain Greville, followed by two or three men, flung himself on another gun, and slew or drove off its gunners.

Hodson characteristically says, 'It was a very comfortable little affair!' As a matter of fact, it was for a dozen fierce minutes a deadly hand-to-hand combat. 'The rebel artillerymen,' says Roberts, 'stood to their guns splendidly, and fought till they were all killed.' The rebels, too, were in great force, and as the passionate *mêlée* swayed to and fro, and the muskets crackled fiercely, and angry thrust of bayonet was answered by desperate stroke of tulwar, the slaughter was great. Some 250 Sepoys were slain, while the British only lost one officer and nineteen men, though nearly a hundred more were wounded. But the battery was destroyed, and four guns brought back in triumph to the camp.

The return of the force was a scene of mad excitement. A wounded officer sat astride one gun, waving his hand in triumph. A soldier, with musket and bayonet fixed, bestrode each horse, and dozens of shouting infantrymen—many with wounds and torn uniform, and all with smoke-blackened faces—clung, madly cheering, to the captured pieces.

On August 7 there rode into the British camp perhaps the most famous and daring soldier in all India, the man with whose memory the siege of Delhi, and the great assault which ended the siege, are for ever associated—John Nicholson.

Nicholson was of Irish birth, the son of a Dublin physician, who had seen twenty years' service in India—service brilliant and varied beyond even what is common in that field of great deeds. There is no space here to tell the story of Nicholson's career, but as he rode into the British camp that August morning, he was beyond all question the most picturesque and striking figure in India. He was a man of splendid physique, and is said to have borne an almost bewildering resemblance to the Czar Nicholas. He was six feet two high, strongly built, with a flowing dark-coloured beard, colourless face, grey eyes, with dark pupils, in whose depths, when he was aroused, a point of steady light, as of steel or of flame, would kindle. Few men, indeed, could sustain

the piercing look of those lustrous, menacing eyes. His voice had a curious depth in it; his whole bearing a singular air of command and strength—an impression which his habit of rare and curt speech intensified. 'He was a man,' says one who knew him well, 'cast in a giant mould, with massive chest and powerful limbs, and an expression ardent and commanding, with a dash of roughness; features of stern beauty, a long black beard, and sonorous voice. His imperial air never left him.' 'Nicholson,' says Lord Roberts, 'impressed me more profoundly than any man I had ever met before, or have ever met since.'

Nicholson, like the Lawrences, like Havelock, and Herbert Edwardes, and many of the Indian heroes of that generation, was a man of rough but sincere piety, and this did not weaken his soldiership—it rather gave a new loftiness to its ideals and a steadier pulse to its courage. 'If there is a desperate deed to be done in India,' Herbert Edwardes told Lord Canning, 'John Nicholson is the man to do it'; and exactly that impression and conviction Nicholson kindled in everybody about him.

'He had,' says Mrs. Steel, 'the great gift. He could put his own heart into a whole camp, and make it believe it was its own.' Such a masterful will and personality as that of Nicholson took absolutely captive the imagination of the wild, irregular soldiery of which he was the leader.

What was Nicholson's fighting quality, indeed, may be judged, say, from the fashion in which he smashed up the mutinous Sepoys at Mardan (as told in Trotter's 'Life' of him), and chased them mile after mile towards the hills of Swat, Nicholson leading the pursuit on his huge grey charger, 'his great sword felling a Sepoy at every stroke!' His faculty for strategy, and for swift, sustained movement is, again, told by the manner in which he intercepted and destroyed the Sealkote mutineers at the fords of the Ravi on their way to Delhi. The mutineers were two days' march ahead of him, and Nicholson made a forced march of forty-four miles in a single day, and under a July sun in India, to get within stroke of them. His little force started at 9 P.M. on July 10, and marched twenty-six miles without a break; after a halt of two hours they started on their second stage of eighteen miles at 10 A.M. During the hottest hour of the afternoon he camped in a grove of trees, and the men fell, exhausted, into instant slumber.

Presently an officer, awakening, looked round for his general. 'He saw Nicholson,' says Trotter, 'in the middle of the hot,

dusty road, sitting bolt upright on his horse in the full glare of that July sun, waiting like a sentinel turned to stone for the moment when his men should resume their march!' They might take shelter from the heat, but he scorned it. A march so swift and fierce was followed by an attack equally vehement, Nicholson leading the rush on the enemy's guns in person, and with his own sword cutting literally in two a rebel gunner in the very act of putting his linstock to the touch-hole of his cannon.

The worship of force is natural to the Eastern mind; and, in 1848, when Nicholson was scouring the country between the Attock and the Jhelum, making incredible marches and shattering whole armies with a mere handful of troops, the mingled admiration and dread of the native mind rose to the pieties of a religion. 'To this day,' a border chief told Younghusband, twelve years after Nicholson was dead, 'our women at night wake trembling, and saying they hear the tramp of Nikalsain's war-horse!' A brotherhood of Fakirs renounced all other creeds, and devoted themselves to the worship of 'Nikkul Seyn.' They would lie in wait for Nicholson, and fall at his feet with votive offerings.

Nicholson tried to cure their inconvenient piety by a vigorous application of the whip, and flogged them soundly on every opportunity. But this, to the Fakir mind, supplied only another proof of the great Irishman's divinity; and, to quote Herbert Edwardes, 'the sect of Nikkul Seynees remained as devoted as ever. *Sanguis martyrum est semen ecclesie*! On one occasion, after a satisfactory whipping, Nicholson released his devotees on the condition that they would transfer their adoration to John Beecher; but as soon as they attained their freedom they resumed their worship of the relentless Nikkul Seyn.' The last of the sect, says Raikes, dug his own grave, and was found dead in it shortly after the news came that Nicholson had fallen at Delhi.

Nicholson's ardour had made him outride the movable column he was bringing up to reinforce the besiegers; but on August 14, with drums beating and flags flying, and welcomed with cheers by the whole camp, that gallant little force marched in. It consisted of the 52nd, 680 strong, a wing of the 61st, the second Punjaub Infantry, with some Beloochees and military police and a field battery.

Work for such a force, and under such a leader, was quickly found. The siege train intended to breach the walls of Delhi was slowly creeping along the road from the Punjaub, and with

unusual daring a great force of mutineers marched from Delhi to intercept this convoy. The movement was detected, and on August 25 Nicholson, with 1,600 infantry, 400 cavalry, and a battery of field guns, set out to cut off the Sepoy force.

The rain fell in ceaseless, wind-blown sheets, as only Indian rain can fall. The country to be crossed was mottled with swamps. The roads were mere threads of liquid mud, and the march was of incredible difficulty. The enemy was overtaken at Nujutgurb, after a sort of wading march which lasted twelve hours. 'No other man in India,' wrote a good soldier afterwards, 'would have taken that column to Nujutgurb. An artillery officer told me that at one time the water was over his horses' backs, and he thought they could not possibly get out of their difficulties. But he looked ahead, and saw Nicholson's great form riding steadily on as if nothing was the matter.'

The rebels, 6,000 strong, held an almost unassailable position, edged round with swamps and crossed in front by a deep and swift stream with an unknown ford. In the dusk, however, Nicholson led his troops across the stream. As they came splashing up from its waters he halted them, and, with his deep, far-reaching voice, told them to withhold their fire till within thirty yards of the enemy. He then led them steadily on, at a foot-pace, over a low hill, and through yet another swamp, while the fire of the enemy grew ever fiercer.

When within twenty yards of the enemy's guns, Nicholson gave the word to charge. A swift volley, and an almost swifter rush, followed. The British in a moment were over the enemy's guns, Nicholson still leading, his gleaming sword, as it rose and fell in desperate strokes, by this time turned bloody red. Gabbett, of the 61st, ran straight at one of the guns, and his men, though eagerly following, could not keep pace with their light-footed officer. He had just reached the gun, fully twenty paces in advance of his men, when his foot slipped, he fell, and was instantly bayoneted by a gigantic Sepoy. With a furious shout—a blast of wrathful passion—his panting men came up, carried the gun, and bayoneted the gunners.

Nicholson had the true genius of a commander. The moment he had carried the guns he swung to the left, and led his men in a rush for a bridge across the canal in the enemy's rear, which formed their only line of retreat to Delhi. An Indian force is always peculiarly sensitive to a stroke at its line of retreat, and

the moment Nicholson's strategy was understood the Sepoy army resolved itself into a flying mob, eager only to outrun the British in the race for the bridge. Nicholson captured 13 guns, killed or wounded 800 of the enemy, and drove the rest, a mob of terrified fugitives, to Delhi, his own casualties amounting to 60.

His men had outmarched their supplies, and they had at once to retrace their steps to Delhi. They had marched 35 miles, under furious rains and across muddy roads, and had beaten a force three times stronger than their own, holding an almost impregnable position, and had done it all in less than 40 hours, during 24 of which they had been without food! It was a great feat, and as the sore-footed, mud-splashed soldiers came limping into the camp all the regimental bands on the Ridge turned out to play them in.

The few hours preceding Nicholson's arrival at the Ridge were the darkest hours of the siege, and some at least of the British leaders were hesitating whether the attempt to carry the city ought not to be abandoned. The circumstances, indeed, were such as might well strain human fortitude to the breaking point. The British force of all arms, native and European, was under 6,000. Its scanty and light artillery commanded only two out of the seven gates of Delhi. The siege, in fact, was, as one writer puts it, 'a struggle between a mere handful of men on an open ridge and a host behind massive and well-fortified walls.' Cholera was raging among the British. The 52nd on August 14 marched into camp 680 strong with only 6 sick. On September 14—only four weeks later, that is—the effectives of the regiment were only 240 of all ranks. Nearly two men out of every three had gone down!

There was treachery, too, in Wilson's scanty force. Their plans were betrayed to the enemy. The slaughter amongst the British officers in the native regiments was such as could only be explained by the fact that they were shot down by their own men from behind, rather than by their open foes in the front. The one good service General Reed did during his brief interval of command was to dismiss from the camp some suspected regiments.

Archdale Wilson's nerve, like that of Barnard and of Reed, his predecessors, was shaken by the terrific strain of the siege, and he contemplated abandoning it.

'Wilson's head is going,' wrote Nicholson to Lawrence on September 7; 'he says so himself, and it is quite evident he

speaks the truth.' It was due chiefly to John Lawrence's clear judgment and iron strength of will that a step so evil and perilous was not taken. Lawrence had flung his last coin, his last cartridge, his last man into the siege, and he warned Wilson that the whole fate of the British in India depended on an immediate assault. 'Every day,' he wrote, 'disaffection and mutiny spread. Every day adds to the danger of the native princes taking part against us.' The loyalty of the Sikhs themselves was strained to the breaking point. Had the British flag fallen back from the Ridge, not merely would Delhi have poured out its armed host, 50,000 strong, but every village in the north-west would have risen, and the tragedy of the Khyber Pass might have been repeated, on a vaster scale, upon the plains of Hindustan. The banks of the Jumna might have seen such a spectacle as Cabul once witnessed.

But there were brave men on the Ridge itself, trained in Lawrence's school, and in whom the spirit of John Lawrence burned with clear and steady flame. Baird Smith and Neville Chamberlain, Norman and Nicholson, and many another, knew that the fortunes and honour of England hung on the capture of Delhi. Lord Roberts tells a curious and wild story that shows what was Nicholson's temper at this crisis :—

I was sitting in Nicholson's tent before he set out to attend the council. He had been talking to me in confidential terms of personal matters, and ended by telling me of his intention to take a very unusual step should the council fail to arrive at any fixed determination regarding the assault. 'Delhi must be taken,' he said, 'and it is absolutely essential that this should be done at once; and, if Wilson hesitates longer, I intend to propose at to-day's meeting that he should be superseded.' I was greatly startled, and ventured to remark that, as Chamberlain was *hors de combat* from his wound, Wilson's removal would leave him (Nicholson) senior officer with the force. He smiled as he answered, 'I have not overlooked that fact. I shall make it perfectly clear that, under the circumstances, I could not possibly accept the command myself, and I shall propose that it be given to Campbell, of the 52nd. I am prepared to serve under him for the time being, so no one can ever accuse me of being influenced by personal motives.'

Roberts puts on record his 'confident belief' that Nicholson would have carried out this daring scheme, and he adds that, in his deliberate judgment, Nicholson was right. Discipline in a crisis so stern counts for less than the public honour and the national safety.

It is to be noted that on a still earlier date—September 11—Nicholson had written to Lawrence telling him Wilson was talking of withdrawing the guns and giving up the siege. 'Had Wilson carried out his threat of withdrawing the guns,' adds Nicholson,

'I was quite prepared to appeal to the army to set him aside, and elect a successor. I have seen lots of useless generals in my day; but such an ignorant, croaking obstructive as he is I have never hitherto met with!'

Fortunately, Wilson found a tonic in the spirit of the men who sat round his council-table. 'The force,' he wrote to the Chief Commissioner, 'will die at their post.' Reinforcements came creeping in, till the forces on the Ridge rose to 8,748 men, of whom, however, less than half were British. The battering-train from Umballa, too, safely reached the camp. It consisted of six 24-pounders, eight 18-pounders, and four 8-inch howitzers, with 1,000 rounds of ammunition per piece. The huge convoy, with its tumbrils and ammunition-carts, sprawled over thirteen miles of road, and formed an amazing evidence of the energy and resources of John Lawrence.

Now at last the siege really began. Ground was broken for the new batteries on September 7, at a distance of 700 yards from the walls, and each battery, as it was armed, broke into wrathful thunder on the city. Each succeeding battery, too, was pushed up closer to the enemy's defences. Thus Major Scott's battery was pushed up to within 180 yards of the wall, and the heavy guns to arm it had to be dragged up under angry blasts of musketry fire. No fewer than 39 men in this single battery were struck down during the first night of its construction! A section of No. 1 Battery took fire under the constant flash of its own guns, and, as the dancing flames rose up from it, the enemy turned on the burning spot every gun that could be brought to bear. The only way to quench the fire was to take sand-bags to the top of the battery, cut them open, and smother the fire with streams of sand.

An artillery officer named Lockhart called for volunteers, and leaped upon the top of the battery, exposed, without shelter, to a storm of cannon balls and musket bullets. Half a dozen Ghoorkas instantly followed him. Four out of the seven men—including Lockhart himself—were shot down, but the fire was quenched.

The fire of the batteries was maintained with amazing energy and daring until September 13. Colonel Brind, for example, records that he never took off his clothes or left his guns from the moment they opened on the 8th to the 14th inst.

(To be continued.)

THE CIRCUS.

THE LAMENT OF A PURE MIND.

WE must reluctantly assume, I suppose, that the success of the new Hippodrome means the death of the old circus, and that if we want again to see the circus of our youth we must first leave London. Not that the Hippodrome is unexhilarating; but it lacks the essential glory of the circus—the noble old traditions are wanting. Those smiling young women, for instance, who throng the Hippodrome doorways, masquerading as grooms—what do they there? At the doorways should be negroes; and ‘What makes you look so pale?’ a clown should ask, ere the evening is over, of the blackest of them. And tan—what is a circus without tan? That mingled scent of horse and tan that used to meet one at the pay-box is inseparably a part of the circus fascination. But there is no tan at the Hippodrome, nor is it suggested for a moment that it is any more the domain of horses than of lions. A horse now and then, it is true, eludes the vigilance of the manager and finds its way into the ring; but I heard the other evening two of the audience exchange satisfaction upon the security from equitation that the Hippodrome assures, and I am certain they were expressing the feeling of the house. For any emphasis that was laid upon horses we might as well have been in Venice. And they call it a Hippodrome! the word circus, it seems, having gone out of date. Only in the provinces, those strongholds of good sense and wise conservatisms, and in Limbo, does the word circus now cause a thrill. In London we are too clever.

‘Horses bore one,’ say the new sightseers; which means, of course, that the circus is not for them at all. For them the Hippodrome, the Hall of Variety. The circus is for a class of pure mind that is not bored: that takes with rapture everything that is offered. When Lord George Sanger (there is no peer of the realm on the roll-call of Variety Hall managers!) when Lord George Sanger sends round his procession to intimate to a palpitating town that all are invited, there is a tacit omission of critical, nicely-appraising, hair-splitting faculties. The circus is not for them; it is for the childlike, the indiscriminating, the

acceptive ; for the same pure minds that enjoy apple dumplings. Whatever enters the ring should stir you to your depths—even an exhibition of what is called the Haute École—or you may as well be elsewhere. I must confess, with all my circus enthusiasms, to some desperately dull moments during exhibitions of the Haute École ; but we all have our lapses. Even then, however, the circus exerts its spell. Look round the house—the staff of grooms are permitting no shade of tedium to cross their countenances ; all are tense, interested, delighted. They clap their white gloves with splendidly simulated approval, even surprise. If one's eyes stray from the Haute École they can rest upon these loyal servants. To a pure mind the circus can never be dull.

With the horses has gone the ring-master. He figured once at the Hippodrome the other evening, and was then lost for ever. But a circus without a ring-master ! They used to have black hair, parted in the middle and beautifully smoothed, evening dress (even at *matinées*) and white gloves. The ring-master was almost one's earliest hero : the butcher came first perhaps, and then the policeman and railway guard ; but the ring-master, when his hour struck, thrust these plebeians, these usurpers, these Warbecks and Simnels, into impenetrable darkness. That whip was beyond all steels, all truncheons, all bull's-eye lanterns and whistles ; one would not exchange it for a sceptre. The ring-master's effulgence was superior even to the dimming influences of the clown's wit. That immortal dialogue following upon the bet of a bottle of 'wine' (always 'wine': what is 'wine'? champagne? claret? sherry? port?—port, I suspect) that the ring-master could not answer three questions with plain yes or no : how often have I heard it and how potent it always is ! The first question was anything ; the second question was anything ; but the third, propounded by the clown after long self-communing, was steeped in guile : 'Do you *still* beat your wife?' There is no way out of that ; affirmative and negative alike are powerless to rob that 'still' of its sting ; and off goes the clown with his bottle of wine, crack goes the whip, round ambles the old white horse with a back like Table Mountain, and the Signorina resumes her pretty capers. And to-day the ring-master is seen only for an instant, and the speaking clown not at all !

And there is another, a tenderer, loss. With the ring-master

and the clown, the tan and the horses, have passed the ladies of the ring. We who are older can perhaps spare them with a finer stoicism than the very young; but here, on such a subject as this, my pen gives place to a worthier—to one who has written some of the most charming prose of any living author. Readers of 'Dream Days' will remember how in his romantic childhood Mr. Kenneth Grahame, accompanied by Harold, visited by happy accident the circus—'the magic ring.' Let us have some true eloquence:—

We gripped the red cloth in front of us, and our souls sped round and round with Coralie, leaping with her, prone with her, swung by mane or tail with her. It was not only the ravishment of her delirious feats, nor her cream-coloured horse of fairy breed, long-tailed, roe-footed, an enchanted prince surely, if ever there was one! It was her more than mortal beauty—displayed, too, under conditions never vouchsafed to us before—that held us spellbound. What princess had arms so dazzlingly white, or went delicately clothed in such pink and spangles? Hitherto we had known the outward woman as but a drab thing, hourglass-shaped, nearly legless, bunched here, constricted there; slow of movement, and given to deprecating lusty action of limb. Here was a revelation! From henceforth our imaginations would have to be revised and corrected up to date. In one of those swift rushes the mind makes in high-strung moments, I saw myself and Coralie, close enfolded, pacing the world together, o'er hill and plain, through storied cities, past rows of applauding relations—I in my Sunday knickerbockers, she in her pink and spangles.

Summers sicken, flowers fail and die, all beauty but rides round the ring and out at the portal; even so Coralie passed in her turn, poised sideways, panting, on her steed; lightly swayed as a tulip-bloom, bowing on this side and on that as she disappeared; and with her went my heart and my soul, and all the light and glory and the entrancement of the scene.

Harold woke up with a gasp. 'Wasn't she beautiful?' he said, in quite a subdued way for him. I felt a momentary pang. We had been friendly rivals before, in many an exploit; but here was altogether a more serious affair. Was this, then, to be the beginning of strife and coldness, of civil war on the hearth-stone and the sundering of old ties? Then I recollected the true position of things, and felt very sorry for Harold; for it was inexorably written that he would have to give way to me, since I was the elder. Rules were not made for nothing in a sensibly constructed universe.

But Coralie's reign was not for ever. A few minutes later—

Brayed in by trumpets, Zephyrine swung passionately into the arena. With a bound she stood erect, one foot upon each of her supple, plunging Arabs; and at once I knew that my fate was sealed, my chapter closed, and the Bride of the Desert was the one bride for me. Black was her raiment; great silver stars shone through it, caught in the dusky twilight of her gauze; black as her own hair were the two mighty steeds she bestrode. In a tempest they thundered by—in a whirlwind, a *sciocco* of tan. Her cheeks bore the kiss of an Eastern sun, and the sand-storms of her native desert were her satellites. What was Coralie, with her pink silk, her golden hair, and slender limbs, beside this magnificent, full-figured Cleopatra? In a twinkling we were scouring the desert, she and I

and the two coal-black horses. Side by side, keeping pace in our swinging gallop, we distanced the ostrich, we outstrode the zebra; and as we went it seemed the wilderness blossomed like the rose.

These glowing, impressionable boys would visit in vain the new Hippodrome. No Coralie is there, no Zephyrine. All, all are gone. (But, incidentally, why does not someone compel Mr. Kenneth Grahame to write more?)

The indictment of the new Hippodrome practically consists in the statement that it is not a circus. It is too good. A circus can offer poorer fare and yet by pure minds be considered excellent, unsurpassable. Take, for example, the band. The Hippodrome has a band that would hardly be out of place in the Queen's Hall; but a circus needs no such refinement. It is conceivable that there is a Stradivarius in the Hippodrome orchestra; but a circus bandsman can be sufficiently an Orpheus on a half-guinea cornet. And there is that painful matter of the inexpensive tan. In the old circuses it used to fly up now and then and dust the stalls; and now and then a horse's hoof would beat against the side of the ring with a heavy thud. All this is gone. There are no brazen discords now, no heavy thuds, no flying, aromatic tan. And no stables! It used to be a rapture to go through the stables in the interval—down the long, sloping passages, with gas jets in wire cages—and find oneself between the tails of countless piebald horses extending as far as the eye could reach. Here and there a glimpse might be caught of an acrobat or a clown, or, more exquisite sight, of a fair equestrienne. The friendly, warm scent of those stables I can recall at this moment. Now it is no more. It used to puff out into the street and act as a more attractive invitation to the passer-by than any prismatic poster. And with it came muffled strains of the band and the crack of a whip—all combining in the late-comer to work his anticipation to intensity. These excitements are over. Cranbourne Street knows them not.

And those old, pleasant, innocent frauds are not practised there: the imposing five-barred gates that, as the horse approached them, were sloped into insignificant wattles; the rings through which the Signorina purported to leap, but which in reality were insinuated over her by compliant attendants. And then there was that venerable jockey performance, the culmination of which was a leap from the ring to a standing position—albeit at an angle of thirty degrees—on the horse's

back. In the old circuses it was the custom of the horseman to miss the crowning jump two or three times, in order that a fiercer flame of interest might be kindled in the audience. After two failures the band would stop (always the presage of a moment of strain supreme), the horse's head would be loosed, he would be urged to a greater pace, and the feat would gloriously succeed. Then what a crash of brass and outburst of delight in the building, involving even the staff and ring-master in the expression of ecstasy. Those old simple days!

The versatility of the circus fills an ordinary being with despair. On one evening, I remember, two dazzling brothers, dressed in the costume of naval officers, walked airily up and down a pair of parallel tight ropes—danced, leaped, turned somersaults; and then, as if this were not enough, took each a violin, and, proceeding with their capers on their dizzy thread, played the while a tune: not merely any tune, but a recognisable one—the 'Keel Row,' or something of that order. Now to most persons it is not given to dance even on a level floor; but here were men who could dance on a string, and were musical to boot. In course of years I might, I fancy, reach to a painful progress down a thick rope, but never, I am certain, could I fiddle out a recognisable tune. Not that black envy spoiled my appreciation of the brethren. On the contrary, I experienced pure, unselfish admiration. But why are gifts distributed with such curious impartiality? Why can every stableman play the concertina?

A worse shock to my vanity was in store. To be put to confusion by the superior accomplishment of one's own kind is nothing. It happens every day. But to be shamed by a seal is another matter. For years and years I have tried, and tried in vain, to attain even the simplest proficiency as a juggler, an equilibrist. To keep three balls in the air at once, to balance a stick on my forehead—these have been steady ideals for a quarter of a century; but I can do neither. Yet a little later on the same evening, a seal—an ordinary wet seal from some chilly Northern sea, a thing that is killed to keep warm the shoulders of rich men's wives—balanced a billiard cue on its nose with as much intelligence as the superb Cinquevalli. That animals can be taught routine, I knew; that they can be coached into mechanical feats is a commonplace; but to get a seal to understand the law of gravity is a miracle. Not only in a stationary position did it balance the cue, but it moved flappingly

along the stage with its precarious burden. This is very wonderful. And other things happened too—displays of humour, well-reasoned games of ball, and so forth—which show that it is time for us to revise our notions of this gentle creature. Here is a potential new force. It is time to clothe our wealthy ladies in other material, and think of the seal less as a skin than a mind. We might try experiments. Suppose the Lord Chancellor really were a Great Seal. . . . Perhaps the seal is the overman of the future.

Versatility does not, however, flourish in a luxurious temple like the Hippodrome as in the smaller travelling circuses and the circuses proper. There, everyone can throw a somersault at a pinch—even a double one; everyone can crack a whip; and no one is too proud to exchange lyrical tights for the prosaic uniform of an attendant. Indeed, it is part of the fun—an additional joy—to keep track of this perplexing variousness of the performers; to detect in the ring-master of turn 8 the daring bare-backed steeplechaser of turn 2, and in the third Brother Belloni of turn 10 to identify the clown Alberto who, in turn 5, while the pink lady rested after the arduous task of having banners slipped between her feet and the horse's back (called a 'flying leap'), cracked such delicious jokes. But this discovery would come as a shock; one likes to think of a clown as a clown for all time. One likes to think of him as wearing ever a conical hat and flamboyant trousers eight sizes too large. I met our local circus clown once (Bimbo was his unforgettable name) in his own everyday clothes, and for a moment it was as though the light had died out of the world. Later in life I learned that a well-known waiter in mufti can depress one similarly—though not to the same extent. But to meet, after beef-eating hours, a favourite Beefeater in a cricket cap, must be worst of all—worse than a bishop in tweeds. But is it possible to make a favourite of a Beefeater? Can one play with fire?

And the zeal of the circus! That little army of grooms that guard the two doorways, and, when the turn is done, rush to prepare the ring for the next—how swiftly deft they are! The way they roll up the carpet at the Hippodrome and transform the ring into a fairy palace (beautiful desecration!) is a turn in itself. Firemen have the name for rapid execution, but no brigade could beat that. Those diverting ill-dressed clowns, that, affecting to assist, only impede, are not allowed in when real business is afoot.

It seems that there are people, by the way, who prefer the noisy buffooneries and parrotings of the theatre clown to these artists. At Hengler's in Argyll Street—before folk skated there on real ice—was one Auguste (which has, I believe, come to be a generic name), whose imperious gesture of command, bidding the servants remove the carpet, is indelibly stamped on my memory. Marceline, as the Hippodrome's Auguste is called, is also great. To remember his true genius as an ingratiating grotesque, and then to watch him, as I did last winter, doing his best to leaven the inanities of the comic portions of Cinderella—so foreign to the spirit of the circus proper—was a misery. When will someone take these venerable conventions in hand and bruise them into impossibility? When will this illusion that vulgarity is the life-blood of pantomime be dispelled, and the sweet story of Cinderella be prepared for children's laughter, shorn of the coarseness of the ugly sisters and their gross father? Must pantomimes always be dominated by comedians whose ideal is to make Seven Dials guffaw?

But so far as the circus is concerned, such regeneration is irrelevant; for the circus should know nothing of Cinderella. Mazeppa—yes, and Dick Turpin's ride to York; although I doubt if we shall see either in our London pleasure dome. The new Mazeppa is Henri Fournier, lashed to a Mors car: a Mors car—portentous name! and the Dick Turpin of this era would escape from Black Maria on something far fleeter than Black Bess. Or a Masque of Horses might too fittingly be prepared to-day, when horses are a little in disgrace, wherein some friend of the noble creature should devise a pageant of his use to the world from earliest times, with the great individual horses of history—such as the Earl of Warwick's, slain to hearten his men—in occasional tableaux; the whole culminating ironically in the triumph of steam, pedals, and paraffin. But I fear this programme would be too appropriate to a Hippodrome to be popular. I was forgetting that 'horses bore one.' Unless, of course, they 'plunge.'

E. V. LUCAS.

'THE GRASS O' THE GRAVES.'

I HAD strolled into the churchyard of Ballycarney, partly because of its quaint old gravestones, and partly for a peep at the lichened church through which Noll Cromwell's cannon-balls had whistled their war-hymns. To my disgust I found the sacred enclosure everywhere infested by goats. Goats browsed among the tombs, clanking their hobbling-chains over the graves of the departed. There were goats in the ruined chancel, where those rugged chieftains the O'Carneys, of Ballycarney, rested shoulder to shoulder. There were goats in the bleak, nettle-grown space towards the north—Ballycarney's potter's field. One could scarcely stir for goats, of every size, colour, and age, from the ill-tempered patriarch of his tribe to the kid of yesterday's weaning.

It was not strange, under these circumstances, that I should anathematise goats. I did so, and with emphasis. The words were 'hardly out of my mouth' (to use an Irish idiom) when from the old church there stepped forth a grey and wizened hunchback. It was Danny Nowlan, the parish sexton, tutelary genius of the place.

'Take shame to yourself,' cried the little grave-digger, 'for spakin' words the like o' them. Little ye know, I'll go bail, that my goats are no common ones. Little ye think, that comes among them wid a gibe on your lips, that the sowl of a man dwells under the hairy hide of every goat in Ballycarney churchyard!'

I have fads of my own, and lunacy is but an exaggeration of the fad. So I did not smile at the queer hunchback, crazy as he seemed to be. Instead, I craved his indulgence and the pardon of his goats, pleading ignorance in excuse for my hasty language.

Danny Nowlan was mollified. 'Sure an' if ye didn't know,' he said, 'ye couldn't be expected to understand. Sit ye down on the stone there—'tis ould Sir Geoffrey O'Carney's by the same token—an' I'll be tellin' ye all about myself an' the goats.'

I took my seat accordingly upon Sir Geoffrey's sepulchre, while Danny expounded to me what he termed his 'thayory.' 'As sexton o' the churchyard,' he said, 'I have the rights o' the

grass—meanin', d'ye see, that I can graze any bastes belongin' to me on the graves. An' 'tis good, rich grass, your honour, that grows in these churchyards. But the stuff that's in the grass, sure that differs wid every grave—an' that's where my thayory begins.

'I started wid one, solitary goat, because I was poor then, an' hadn't learned wisdom. That single goat, combined wid a näatural gift of observation, taught me all I know. To-day I have a neat house beyant, an' five-an'-fifty pound in the Kilmore Bank. All along o' the goats—an' the grass o' the graves.

'You see, I didn't like to put my one goat on the graves o' the dacint people, because I thought their childher an' them that belonged to them mightn't like it. So I just hobbled my lad over beyant, where the potter's field is, an' all the tramps an' ne'er-do-wells are laid. Would ye believe it? After three weeks' feedin' in the potter's field, chains and staples couldn't hould that goat! He became the worst blackguard an' the worst wanderer—savin' your presence, for 'tis a wanderer you are yourself—in the barony o' Slievecarney. Divil a day but I had to go stravaiglin' afther him—a mighty hard thing for a poor boy wid a back like mine, *avie*.

'Well, one mornin', while I was leadin' Oliver Crummle (I called him Crummle because I knew no good of him)—while I was leadin' him back to his ould quarters in potter's field, word came to me of a buryin'. So I just tied Oliver to the nearest tombstone, an' left him there. I never noticed at the time that the grave belonged to Father Roger Kavanagh (God rest his sowl!)—the best priest, an' the best man that ever died in the parish of Ballycarney. Ye can tell what a saint Father Roger was by seein' the little they have to say about him on the stone—for 'tis mostly the best men that have the shortest epitaphs. Father Roger's real tomb is in the poor people's hearts; for 'tis the good, honest man he was entirely.

'Anyhow I left my goat overnight on the priest's grave. Next day, when I got out o' bed, I remembered him; an', says I to myself, "I'll go bail my bould Crummle is half-way to Castle Carney back gate by this time." So out I goes; an' there, if you'll believe me, was Oliver Crummle, squattin' aisily on his hunkers, eatin' away at the grass on Father Roger's grave, just as if he had never strolled a furlong from the spot in his life.

"*Arrah*, then, Oliver, *ma bouche*," says I, "if your new

quarters suit you so well, you may as well stick to them." So there he stayed, tied to the priest's tomb.

'Your honour, that goat got so well-behaved that I took the chain off his leg altogether. You couldn't coax him away from the churchyard; an' he used to look so sad when I called him "Crummle" that I changed his name to "Owen Roe." The farmers heard tell of his convarision, an' came from miles around to see him. In his ould wicked days he used to ask nothin' better than to break out an' eat Madam Carney's fancy garden hedges at the Castle; an' his change o' sperrit so pleased Madam Carney that, 'pon my sowkins, she offered me five guineas for the craythur. Wid the money I bought two young goats instead o' one. But I larned a lesson from Owen Roe, late Oliver Crummle. No more goats went to graze in potter's field. I kept them tied to the pillars o' Father Roger's tombstone; an' the result was that the fame o' my goats spread from the Heights of Irelan' to Kilmore City. I made money, hand over fist; an' every penny went into goats, until I had so many bastes that divil another could find room over Father Roger Kavanagh. So I took a quiet rayson wid myself, d'ye see—an' it was that way I came to lay down my thayory.

'I says to myself: "'Tis not the grass that counts, but the man that's buried under the grass. Graze a goat over a tramp or a blackguard, an' he'll turn out blackguard or tramp. But graze your goat over a dacint, honest man, an' you'll have a dacint, honest goat." 'Tis aisy to see the dayduction I made from them facts—as Mr. Carney himself admitted to me afterwards.

'Well, Father Roger's grave bein' occupied, I had to look around for a new piece o' good man's grass. "I'll try the Quality next," says I; an' so I tied my new goats to the very stone your sittin' on—the tomb of ould Geoffrey O'Carney, Mr. Carney's ancestor, that was lord here before Yellow William's time. The goats turned out well enough in point o' dacincy; but they got so mortal proud off that O'Carney grass that they were no use any more. They turned up their noses at nettles and *prassheoch*. Nothin' but the best an' tindherest grass was good enough for the likes o' them; for the ould O'Carney sap had got into their veins, an' there's no finer an' no ouldher blood in Leinster than the same O'Carneys—or Carneys, as they call themselves now, since every *gombeen*-man sticks an "O" to his father's name. Sure that's the Carney pride all over! They'd rather sacrifice

the "O" that they fought for six hundred year an' more than share it wid them that had no call to it. Well, anyhow, the goats that grazed over Sir Geoffrey an' his wife (she was a Butler of Ormond) turned out so haughty that I had to give them to the priest—because, ye see, 'tis the custom in these parts to take all your troubles to the Church.

'By-an'-by my thayory worked so well, an' I made so much by grazin' goats over good, quiet men, that I could afford to expayriment—as Mr. Carney calls it. Them expayriments would fill a book!

'I grazed a goat on Marty Dowling the poacher's grave; an' that goat never cared for his own grass, but loved nothin' so much as stealin' from his neighbour. Another goat fed over Larry Gaffagan (the best hurler, runner, an' lepper in the parish was Larry!); an' the divil himself couldn't hould that baste. Wid my own two eyes I saw him take the big inthrance gates at Castle Carney in one bound. He could run faster than the wind, an' Mr. Carney called him "The Athlete." Ye can see for yourself how he became an athlete.

'But the last o' my expayriments was wid the goat I took outside the wall to where murdherers an' suicides—mighty few o' the like was ever in Ballycarney!—has to be buried. One dark night the poor, misguided crayture burst his chain, gored two other goats to death, and was found drowned in the river Feoir next morning. There he lay—murdherer an' suicide in one; an' 'twas all my fault for grazin' him where I did.

'That brought me remorse o' conscience, and I followed out the thayory widout any more expayriments. The good goats that could stand a bit o' divilment, I put on the graves o' play-boys an' merry fellows; an' the bad goats, that were far gone in wickedness, were hobbled over fine, dacint men, like Father Roger Kavanagh. But the goats that were too poor-sperrited an' humble beyond rayson I brought to the O'Carney graves, where the grass is so proud it wouldn't grow daisies. An' the outcome o' my thayory, your honour, is that my goats keep at the same level all the year round. *Sorra* finer breed o' goats ye'll find from here to the Black North.'

Danny paused abruptly at this juncture—his crooked figure assuming an attitude of the keenest attention. Indeed, there was something strongly suggestive of his own goats about the little man as he listened eagerly, snuffing the air, goat-fashion,

as though scenting distant trouble. Then, clambering upon Sir Geoffrey's tombstone, he took a rapid survey of the churchyard. A light of comprehension spread over his wrinkled face as he hopped from his perch. Meanwhile my own duller ears had caught the sound which disturbed my mentor, the distant clashing of goat horns.

'Muisha! Muisha!' cried the little sexton; 'tis the thayory workin', your honour. Last night I shifted a dacint goat from Father Roger's grave to where Lanty Horan—the swearin, swaggerin', fighting blackguard—lies under the blackthorn beyant; an' the goat that was browsin' over poor Lanty I dragged wid great trouble to Father Roger's blessed grass.

'An' what, think you, is the result o' the thransfer? There's Lanty Horan's savage goat turned as mild as spring water, grazin' peaceably, an' strivin' to forget his evil past, when along comes the very same nice, gentle goat that I took from the priest's grave only last night, May I die an Orangeman, if Father Roger's goat hasn't been utterly ruined by one single night o' Lanty Horan; an' if I don't make haste, he'll puck my latest convart into goat's-flesh.'

And away limped Danny Nowlan to prevent any further mischief which might arise from the too accurate workings of his 'thayory' on 'the grass o' the graves.'

GERALD BRENAN.

*COUNT HANNIBAL.*¹

BY STANLEY J. WEYMAN.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

IN THE LITTLE CHAPTER-HOUSE.

THE sun was an hour high, and in Angers the shops and booths, after the early fashion of the day, were open or opening. Through all the gates country folk were pressing into the gloomy streets of the Black Town with milk and fruit; and at doors and windows housewives cheapened fish, or chaffered over the fowl for the pot. For men must eat, though there be gibbets in the Place Ste.-Croix: gaunt gibbets, high and black and twofold, each, with its dangling ropes, like a double note of interrogation.

But gibbets must eat also; and between ground and noose was so small a space in those days that a man dangled almost before he knew it. The sooner, then, the paniers were empty, and the clown, who pays for all, was beyond the gates, the better he, for one, would be pleased. In the market, therefore, was hurrying. Men cried their wares in lowered voices, and tarried but a little for the oldest customer. The bargain struck, the more timid among the buyers hastened to shut themselves into their houses again; the bolder, who ventured to the Place to confirm the rumour with their eyes, talked in corners and in lanes, avoided the open, and eyed the sinister preparations from afar. The shadow of the things which stood before the cathedral affronting the sunlight with their gaunt black shapes lay across the length and breadth of Angers. Even in the corners where men whispered, even in the cloisters where men bit their nails in impotent anger, the stillness of fear ruled all. Whatever Count Hannibal had it in his mind to tell the city, it seemed unlikely—and hour by hour it seemed less likely—that any would contradict him.

He knew this as he walked in the sunlight before the inn, his spurs ringing on the stones as he made each turn, his movements watched by a hundred peering eyes. After all, it was not hard to

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rule, nor to have one's way in this world. But then, he went on to remember, not everyone had his self-control, or that contempt for the weak and unsuccessful which lightly took the form of mercy. He held Angers safe, curbed by his gibbets. With M. de Montsoreau he might have trouble; but the trouble would be slight, for he knew Montsoreau, and what it was the Lieutenant-Governor valued above profitless bloodshed.

He might have felt less confident had he known what was passing at that moment in a room off the small cloister of the Abbey of St. Aubin—a room known at Angers as the Little Chapter-House. It was a long chamber with a groined roof and stone walls, panelled as high as a tall man could reach with dark chestnut wood. Gloomily lighted by three grated windows, which looked on a small inner green, the last resting-place of the Benedictines, the room itself seemed at first sight no more than the last resting-place of worn-out odds and ends. Piles of thin sheepskin folios, dog's-eared and dirty, the rejected of the choir, stood against the walls; here and there among them lay a large brassbound tome on which the chains that had fettered it to desk or lectern still rusted. A broken altar cumbered one corner: a stand bearing a curious—and rotting—map filled another. In the other two corners a medley of faded scutcheons and banners, which had seen their last Toussaint procession, mouldered slowly into dust—into much dust. The air of the room was full of it.

In spite of which the long oak table that filled the middle of the chamber shone with use: so did the great metal standish which it bore. And though the seven men who sat about the table seemed, at the first glance and in that gloomy light, as rusty and faded as the rubbish behind them, it needed but a second look at their lean jaws and hungry eyes to be sure of their vitality.

He who sat in the great chair at the end of the table was indeed rather plump than thin. His white hands were gay with rings, and his peevish chin rested on a falling-collar of lace worthy of a Cardinal. But though the Bishop's Vicar was heard with deference, it was noticeable that when he had ceased to speak his hearers looked to the priest on his left, to Father Pezelay, and waited to hear his opinion before they gave their own. The Father's energy, indeed, had dominated them, clerks and townsfolk alike, as it had dominated the Parisian *dévotés* who knew him well. The vigour which hate inspires passes often for solid strength; and he who had seen with his own eyes the things

done in Paris spoke with an authority to which the more timid quickly and easily succumbed.

Yet gibbets are ugly things ; and Thuriot, the printer, whose pride had been tickled by a summons to the conclave, began to wonder if he had done wisely in coming. Lescot, too, who presently ventured a word. 'But if M. de Tavannes' order be to do nothing,' he said doubtfully, 'you would not, reverend Father, have us resist his Majesty's will ?'

'God forbid, my friend !' Father Pezelay cried with unction. 'But his Majesty's will is to do—to do for the glory of God and the saints and His Holy Church ! How ? Is that which was lawful at Saumur unlawful here ? Is that which was lawful at Tours unlawful here ? Is that which the King did in Paris—to the utter extermination of the unbelieving and the purging of that Sacred City—against his will here ? Nay, his will is to do—to do as they have done in Paris and in Tours and in Saumur ! But his Minister is unfaithful ! The woman whom he has taken to his bosom has bewildered him with her charms and her sorceries, and put it in his mind to deny the mission he bears.'

'You are sure, beyond chance of error, that he bears letters to that effect, good Father ?' the printer ventured.

'Ask my lord's Vicar ! He knows the letters and the import of them !'

'They are to that effect,' the Archdeacon answered, drumming on the table with his fingers and speaking somewhat sullenly. 'I was in the Chancellery and I saw them. They are duplicates of those sent to Bordeaux.'

'Then the preparations he has made must be against the Huguenots,' Lescot, the ex-Provost, said with a sigh of relief. And Thuriot's face lightened also. 'He must intend to hang one or two of the ringleaders.'

'Think it not !' Father Pezelay cried in his high shrill voice. 'I tell you the woman has bewitched him, and he will deny his letters !'

For a moment there was silence. Then, 'But dare he do that, reverend Father ?' Lescot asked slowly and incredulously. 'What ? Suppress the King's letters ?'

'There is nothing he will not dare ! There is nothing he has not dared !' the priest answered vehemently ; and the recollection of the scene in the great guard-room of the Louvre, when Tavannes had so skilfully turned the tables on him, added venom to his tone.

'She who lives with him is the devil's. She has bewitched him with her spells and her Sabbaths! She bears the mark of the Beast on her bosom, and for her the fire is even now kindling!'

The laymen who were present shuddered. The two canons who faced them crossed themselves, muttering 'Avaunt, Satan!'

'It is for you to decide,' the priest continued, gazing on them passionately, 'whether you will side with him or with the Angel of God! For I tell you it was none other executed the divine judgments at Paris! It was none other but the Angel of God held the sword at Tours! It is none other holds the sword here! Are you for him or against him? Are you for him, or for the woman with the mark of the Beast? Are you for God or against God? For the hour draws near! The time is at hand! You must choose! You must choose!' And, striking the table with his hand, he leaned forward, and with glittering eyes fixed each of them in turn, as he cried, 'You must choose! You must choose!' He came to the Archdeacon last.

The Bishop's Vicar fidgeted in his chair, his face a shade more sallow, his cheeks hanging a trifle more loosely, than ordinary. 'If my brother were here!' he muttered. 'If M. de Montsoreau had arrived!'

But Father Pezelay knew whose will would prevail if Montsoreau met Tavannes at his leisure. To force Montsoreau's hand, to surround him on his first entrance with a howling mob already committed to violence, to set him at their head and pledge him before he knew with whom he had to do—this had been, this still was, the priest's design.

But how was he to pursue it while those gibbets stood? While their shadows lay even on the chapter table, and darkened the faces of his most forward associates? That for a moment staggered the priest; and had not private hatred, ever renewed by the touch of the scar on his brow, fed the fire of bigotry he had yielded, as the rabble of Angers were yielding, reluctant and scowling, to the hand which held the city in its grip. But to have come so far on the wings of hate, and to do nothing! To have come avowedly to preach a crusade, and to sneak away cowed! To have dragged the Bishop's Vicar hither, and fawned and cajoled and threatened by turns—and for nothing! These things were passing bitter—passing bitter, when the morsel of vengeance he foresaw smacked so sweet on the tongue.

For it was no common vengeance, no layman's vengeance,

coarse and clumsy, which the priest had imagined in the dark hours of the night, when his feverish brain kept him wakeful. To see Count Hannibal roll in the dust had gone but a little way towards satisfying him. No! But to drag from his arms the woman for whom he had sinned, to subject her to shame and torture in the depths of some convent, and finally to burn her as a witch—it was that which had seemed to the priest in the night hours a vengeance sweet in the mouth.

But the thing seemed unattainable in the circumstances. The city was cowed; the priest knew that no dependence was to be placed on Montsoreau, whose vice was avarice and whose first object was plunder. To the Archdeacon's feeble words, therefore, 'We must look,' the priest retorted sternly, 'not to M. de Montsoreau, reverend Father, but to the pious of Angers! We must cry in the streets, "They do violence to God! They wound God and His Mother!" And so, and so only, shall the unholy thing be rooted out!'

'Amen!' the Curé of St.-Benoist muttered, lifting his head; and his dull eyes glowed awhile. 'Amen! Amen!' Then his chin sank again upon his breast.

But the Canons of Angers looked doubtfully at one another, and timidly at the speakers; the meat was too strong for them. And Lescot and Thuriot shuffled in their seats. At length, 'I do not know' Lescot muttered timidly.

'You do not know?'

'What can be done!'

'The people will know! Trust them!' Father Pezelay retorted.

'But the people will not rise without a leader.'

'Then will I lead them!'

'Even so, reverend Father—I doubt,' Lescot faltered. And Thuriot nodded assent. Gibbets were erected in those days rather for laymen than for the Church.

'You doubt!' the priest cried. 'You doubt!' His baleful eyes passed from one to the other; from them to the rest of the company. He saw that with the exception of the Curé of St.-Benoist all were of a mind. 'You doubt! Nay, but I see what it is! It is this,' he continued slowly and in a different tone, 'the King's will goes for nothing in Angers! His writ runs not here. And Holy Church cries in vain for help against the oppressor. I tell you, the sorceress who has bewitched him has bewitched you also. Beware! beware, therefore, lest it be with you as with him! And the fire that shall consume her, spare not your houses!'

The two citizens crossed themselves, grew pale and shuddered. The fear of witchcraft was great in Angers, the peril, if accused of it, enormous. Even the Canons looked startled. 'If—if my brother were here,' the Archdeacon repeated feebly, 'something might be done!'

'Vain is the help of man!' the priest retorted sternly, and with a gesture of sublime dismissal. 'I turn from you to a mightier than you!' And, leaning his head on his hands, he covered his face.

The Archdeacon and the churchmen looked at him, and then with scared eyes looked at one another. Their one desire now was to be quit of the matter; and one by one with the air of whipped curs they rose to their feet, and in a hurry to be gone muttered a word or two shamefacedly and got themselves out of the room. Lescot and the printer were not slow to follow, and in less than a minute the two strange preachers, the men from Paris, remained the only occupants of the chamber; save, that is, for a lean official in rusty black, who throughout the conference had sat by the door.

Until the last shuffling footstep had ceased to sound in the still cloister no one spoke. Then Father Pezelay looked up, and the eyes of the two priests met in a long gaze. 'What think you?' Pezelay muttered at last.

'Wet hay,' the other answered dreamily, 'is slow to kindle, yet burns if the fire be big enough. At what hour does he state his will?'

'At noon.'

'In the Council Chamber?'

'It is so given out.'

'It is three hundred yards from the Place Ste.-Croix and he must go guarded,' the Curé of St.-Benoist continued in the same dull fashion. 'He cannot leave many in the house with the woman. If it were attacked in his absence——'

'He would return, and ——' Father Pezelay shook his head, and his cheek turned a shade paler. It was evident that he saw with his mind's eye more than he expressed.

'*Hoc est corpus*,' the other muttered, his dreamy gaze on the table. 'If he met us then, on his way to the house, and we had bell, book, and candle, would he stop?'

'He would not stop!' Father Pezelay rejoined.

'He would not?'

'I know the man!'

'Then——' but the rest St.-Benoist whispered, his head drooping forward; whispered so low that even the lean man behind him, listening with greedy ears, failed to follow the meaning of his superior's words. But that he spoke plainly enough for his hearer Father Pezelay's face was witness. Astonishment, fear, hope, triumph, it reflected all in turn; and, underlying all, a subtle malignant mischief, as if a devil's eyes peeped through the holes in an opera mask.

When the other was at last silent Pezelay drew a deep breath. 'Tis bold! Bold! Bold!' he muttered. 'But have you thought? He who bears the——'

'Brunt?' the other whispered with a chuckle. 'He may suffer? Yes, but it will not be you or I! No, he who was last here shall be first there! The Archdeacon-Vicar—if we can persuade him—who knows but that even for him the crown of martyrdom is reserved?' And the dull eyes flickered with unholy amusement.

'And the alarm that brings him from the Council Chamber?'

'Need not of necessity be real. The pinch will be to make use of it. Make use of it—and the hay will burn!'

'You think it will?'

'What can one man do against a thousand? His own people would not back him.'

Father Pezelay turned to the lean man who kept the door, and, beckoning to him, conferred a while with him in a low voice.

'A score or so I might get,' the man answered presently. 'And well posted, something might be done. But we are not in Paris, good father, where the Quarter of the Butchers is to be counted on, and men know that to kill Huguenots is to do God service! Here'—and he shrugged his shoulders contemptuously—'they are sheep.'

'It is the King's will,' the priest answered, frowning on him darkly.

'Ay, but it is not Tavannes,' the man in black answered with a grimace. 'And he rules here to-day.'

'Fool!' Pezelay retorted. 'He has not twenty with him. Do you do as I say, and leave the rest to heaven!'

'And to you, good master?' the other answered, with a grin. 'For it is not all you are going to do that you have told me. Well, so be it! I'll do my part, but I wish we were in Paris.'

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE ESCAPE.

IN a small back room on the second floor of the inn at Angers, a mean, dingy room which looked into a narrow lane, and commanded no prospect more informing than a blind wall, two men sat, fretting; or, rather, one man sat, his chin resting on his hand, while his companion, less patient or more sanguine, strode ceaselessly to and fro. In the first despair of capture—for they were prisoners—they had made up their minds to the worst, and the slow hours of two days had passed over their heads without kindling more than a faint spark of hope in their breasts. But when they had been taken out and forced to mount and ride—at first with feet tied to the horses' girths—they had let the change, the movement, and the open air fan the flame. They had muttered a word to one another, they had wondered; they had reasoned. And though the silence of their guards—from whose sour vigilance the keenest question drew no response—seemed of ill-omen, and, taken with their knowledge of the man into whose hands they had fallen, should have quenched the spark, these two, having special reasons, the one the buoyancy of youth, the other the faith of an enthusiast, cherished the flame. In the breast of one indeed, it had blazed into a confidence so arrogant that he now took all for granted, and was not content.

'It is easy for you to say, "Patience!"' he cried, as he walked the floor in a fever. 'You stand to lose no more than your life, and if you escape go free at all points! But he has robbed me of more than life! Of my love, and my self-respect, curse him! He has worsted me not once, but twice and thrice! And if he lets me go now, dismissing me with my life, I shall—I shall kill him!' he concluded, through his teeth.

'You are hard to please!'

'I shall kill him!'

'That were to fall still lower!' the minister answered, gravely regarding him. 'I would, M. de Tignonville, you remembered that you are not yet out of jeopardy. Such a frame of mind as yours is no good preparation for death, let me tell you!'

'He will not kill us!' Tignonville cried. 'He knows better than most men how to avenge himself!'

'Then he is above most!' La Tribe retorted. 'For my part I wish I were sure of the fact, and I should sit here more at ease.'

'If we could escape, now, of ourselves!' Tignonville cried. 'Then we should save not only life, but honour! Man, think of it! If we could escape, not by his leave but against it! Are you sure that this is Angers?'

'As sure as a man can be who has only seen Angers once or twice!' La Tribe answered, moving to the casement—which was not glazed—and peering through the rough wooden lattice. 'But if we could escape we are strangers here. We know not which way to go, nor where to find shelter. And for the matter of that,' he continued, turning from the window with a shrug of resignation, 'tis no use to talk of it while yonder foot goes up and down the passage, and its owner bears the key in his pocket.'

'If we could get out of his power as we came into it!' Tignonville cried.

'Ay, if! But it is not every floor has a trap!'

'We could take up a board.'

The minister raised his eyebrows.

'We could take up a board!' the younger man cried; and he stepped the mean chamber from end to end, his eyes on the floor. 'Or—yes, *mon Dieu!*' with a change of attitude, 'we might break through the roof?' And, throwing back his head, he scanned the cobwebbed surface of laths which rested on the unceiled joists.

'Umph!'

'Well, why not, monsieur? Why not break through the ceiling?' Tignonville repeated, and in a fit of energy he seized his companion's shoulder and shook him. 'Stand on the bed, and you can reach it.'

'And the floor which rests on it!'

'*Par Dieu*, there is no floor! 'Tis a cockloft above us! See there! And there!' And the young man sprang on the bed, and thrust the rowel of a spur through the laths.

La Tribe's expression changed. He rose slowly to his feet. 'Try again!' he said.

The young man, his face red, drove the spur again between the laths, and worked it to and fro until he could pass his fingers into the hole he had made. Then he gripped and bent down a length of one of the laths, and, passing his arm as far as the elbow through the hole, moved it this way and that. His eyes, as he

looked down at his companion through the falling rubbish, gleamed with triumph. 'Where is your floor now?' he asked.

'You can touch nothing?'

'Nothing. It's open. A little more and I might touch the tiles.' And he strove to reach higher.

For answer La Tribe gripped him. 'Down! Down, monsieur,' he muttered. 'They are bringing our dinner.'

Tignonville thrust back the lath as well as he could, and slipped to the floor, and hastily the two swept the rubbish from the bed. When Badelon, attended by two men, came in with the meal he found La Tribe at the window blocking much of the light, and Tignonville laid sullenly on the bed. Even a suspicious eye must have failed to detect what had been done; the three who looked in suspected nothing and saw nothing. They went out, the key was turned again on the prisoners, and the footsteps of two of the men were heard descending the stairs.

'We have an hour, now!' Tignonville cried; and leaping, with flaming eyes, on the bed, he fell to hacking and jabbing and tearing at the laths amid a rain of dust and rubbish. Fortunately the stuff, falling on the bed, made little noise; and in five minutes, working half-choked and in a frenzy of impatience, he had made a hole through which he could thrust his arms, a hole which extended almost from one joist to its neighbour. By this time the air was thick with floating lime; the two could scarcely breathe, yet they dared not pause. Mounting on La Tribe's shoulders—who took his stand on the bed—the young man thrust his head and shoulders through the hole, and, resting his arms on the joists, dragged himself up, and with a final effort of strength landed nose and knees on the timbers, which formed his supports. A moment to take breath, and press his torn and bleeding fingers to his lips; then, reaching down, he gave a hand to his companion and dragged him to the same place of vantage.

They found themselves in a long narrow cockloft, not more than six feet high at the highest, and insufferably hot. Between the tiles, which sloped steeply on either hand, a faint light filtered in, disclosing the giant roof-tree running the length of the house, and at the farther end of the loft the main tie-beam, from which a network of knees and struts rose to the roof-tree.

Tignonville, who seemed possessed by unnatural energy, stayed only to put off his boots. Then 'Courage!' he panted, 'all goes

well!' and, carrying his boots in his hands, he led the way, stepping gingerly from joist to joist until he reached the tie-beam. He climbed on it, and, squeezing himself between the struts, entered a second loft similar to the first. At the farther end of this a rough wall of bricks in a timber-frame lowered his hopes; but as he approached it, joy! Low down in the corner where the roof was low, a small door, square, and not more than two feet high, disclosed itself.

The two crept to it on hands and knees and listened. 'It will lead to the leads, I doubt?' La Tribe whispered. They dared not raise their voices.

'As well that way as another!' Tignonville answered recklessly. He was the more eager, for there is a fear which transcends the fear of death. His eyes shone through the mask of dust, the sweat ran down to his chin, his breath came and went noisily. 'Naught matters if we can escape him!' he panted. And he pushed the door recklessly. It flew open, and the two drew back their faces with a cry of alarm.

They were looking, not into the sunlight, but into a grey dingy garret open to the roof, and occupying the upper part of a gable-end somewhat higher than the wing in which they had been confined. Filthy truckle-beds and ragged pallets covered the floor, and, eked out by old saddles and threadbare horserugs, marked the sleeping quarters either of the servants or of travellers of the meaner sort. But the dinginess was naught to the two who knelt looking on it, afraid to move. Was the place empty? That was the point; the question which had first stayed, and then set their pulses galloping.

Painfully their eyes searched each huddle of clothing, scanned each dubious shape. And slowly, as the silence persisted, their heads came forward until the whole floor lay within the field of sight. And still no sound! Then Tignonville stirred, crept through the doorway, and rose up, peering round him. He nodded, and, satisfied that all was safe, the minister followed him.

They found themselves a pace or so from the head of a narrow staircase, leading downwards. Without moving they could see the door which closed it below. Tignonville signed to La Tribe to wait, and himself crept down the stairs. He reached the door and, stooping, set his eye to the hole through which the string of the latch passed. A moment he looked, and then, turning on tiptoe, he stole up again, his face fallen.

'You may throw the handle after the hatchet!' he muttered. 'The man on guard is within four yards of the door.' And in the rage of disappointment he struck the air with his hand.

'Is he looking this way?'

'No. He is looking down the passage towards our room. But it is impossible to pass him.'

La Tribe nodded, and moved softly to one of the lattices which lighted the room. It might be possible to escape that way, by the parapet and the tiles. But he found that the casement was set high in the roof, which sloped steeply from its sill to the eaves. He passed to the other window, in which a little wicket in the lattice stood open. He looked through it. In the giddy void white pigeons were wheeling in the dazzling sunshine, and gazing down he saw far below him, in the hot square, a row of booths, and troops of people moving to and fro like pigmies; and—a strange thing, in the middle of all! Involuntarily, as if the persons below could have seen his face at the tiny dormer, he drew back.

He beckoned to M. Tignonville to come to him; and when the young man complied, he bade him in a whisper look down. 'See!' he muttered. 'There!'

The younger man saw and drew in his breath. Even under the coating of dust his face turned a shade greyer.

'You had no need to fear that he would let us go!' the minister muttered, with half-conscious irony.

'No.'

'Nor I! There are two ropes.' And La Tribe breathed a few words of prayer. The object which had fixed his gaze was a gibbet: the only one of the three which could be seen from their eyrie.

Tignonville, on the other hand, turned sharply away, and with haggard eyes stared about the room. 'We might defend the staircase,' he muttered. 'Two men might hold it for a time.'

'We have no food.'

'No.' And then he gripped La Tribe's arm. 'I have it!' he cried. 'And it may do! It must do!' he continued, his face working. 'See!' And lifting from the floor one of the ragged pallets, from which the straw protruded in a dozen places, he set it flat on his head. It drooped at each corner—it had seen much wear—and while it almost hid his face, it revealed his grimy chin and mortar-stained shoulders. He turned to his companion.

La Tribe's face glowed as he looked. 'It may do!' he cried. 'It's a chance! But you are right! It may do!'

Tignonville dropped the ragged mattress, and tore off his coat; then he rent his breeches at the knee, so that they hung loose about his calves. 'Do you the same!' he cried. 'And quick, man, quick! Leave your boots! Once outside we must pass through the streets under these'—and he took up his burden again and set it on his head—'until we reach a quiet part, and there we——'

'Can hide! Or swim the river!' the minister said. He had followed his companion's example, and now stood under a similar burden. With breeches rent and whitened, and his upper garments in no better case, he looked a sorry figure.

Tignonville eyed him with satisfaction, and turned to the staircase. 'Come,' he cried, 'there is not a moment to be lost. At any minute they may enter our room and find it empty! You are ready? Then, not too softly, or it may rouse suspicion! And mumble something at the door.'

He began himself to scold, and, muttering incoherently, stumbled down the staircase, the pallet on his head rustling against the wall on each side. Arrived at the door he fumbled clumsily with the latch, and, when the door gave way, plumped out with an oath—as if the awkward burden he bore were the only thing on his mind. Badelon—he was on duty—stared at the apparition; but the next moment he sniffed the pallet, which was none of the freshest, and, turning up his nose, he retreated a pace. He had no suspicion; the men did not come from the part of the house where the prisoners lay, and he stood aside to let them pass. In a moment, staggering, and going a little unsteadily, as if they scarcely saw their way, they had passed by him, and were descending the staircase.

So far well! Unfortunately, when they reached the foot of that flight they came on the main passage of the first-floor. It ran right and left, and Tignonville did not know which way he must turn to reach the lower staircase. Yet he dared not hesitate; in the passage, waiting about the doors, were four or five servants, and in the distance he caught sight of three men belonging to Tavannes' company. At any moment, too, an upper servant might meet them, ask what they were doing, and detect the fraud. He turned at random, therefore—to the left as it chanced—and marched along bravely, until the very thing

happened which he had feared. A man came from a room plump upon them, saw them, and held up his hands in horror.

‘What are you doing?’ he cried in a rage and with an oath. ‘Who set you on this?’

Tignonville’s tongue clave to the roof of his mouth. La Tribe from behind muttered something about the stable.

‘And time too!’ the man said. ‘Faugh! But how come you this way? Are you drunk? Here!’ And he opened the door of a musty closet beside him, ‘pitch them in here, do you hear? And take them down when it is dark! Faugh! I wonder you did not carry the things through her ladyship’s room at once! If my lord had been in and met you! Now then, do as I tell you! Are you drunk?’

With a sullen air Tignonville threw in his mattress. La Tribe did the same. Fortunately the passage was ill-lighted, and there were many helpers and strange servants in the inn. The butler only thought them ill-looking fellows who knew no better. ‘Now be off!’ he continued irascibly, ‘This is no place for your sort. Be off!’ And, as they moved, ‘Coming! Coming!’ he cried in answer to a distant summons; and he hurried away on the errand which their appearance had interrupted.

Tignonville would have straightway recovered the pallets, for the man had left the key in the door. But as he went to do so the butler looked back, and the two were obliged to make a pretence of following him. A moment, however, and he was gone; and Tignonville turned anew to regain them. A second time fortune was adverse; a door within a pace of him opened, a woman came out. She recoiled from the strange figure; their eyes met. Unluckily the light from the room behind her fell on his face, and with a shrill cry she named him.

One second and all had been lost, for the crowd of idlers at the other end of the passage had caught her cry, and were looking that way. With presence of mind Tignonville clapped his hand on her mouth, and, huddling her by force into the room, followed her, with La Tribe at his heels.

It was a large room, in which seven or eight people, who had been at prayers when the cry startled them, were rising from their knees. The first thing they saw was Javette on the threshold, struggling in the grasp of a wild man, ragged and begrimed; they concluded that the city had risen and that the massacre was upon them. Carlat threw himself before his mistress, the Countess in

her turn sheltered a young girl, who stood beside her and from whose face the last trace of colour had fled. Madame Carlat and a waiting-woman ran shrieking to the window; in a moment the alarm would have gone abroad.

Tignonville's voice stopped it. 'Don't you know me?' he cried. 'Madame! you at least! Carlat! Are you all mad?'

The words stayed them where they stood in an astonishment scarce less than their alarm. The Countess tried twice to speak; the third time, 'Have you escaped?' she muttered.

Tignonville nodded, his eyes bright with triumph. 'So far,' he said. 'But they may be on our heels at any moment! Where can we hide?'

The Countess, her hand pressed to her side, looked at Javette. 'The door, girl!' she whispered. 'Lock it!'

'Ay, lock it! And they can go by the back-stairs,' Madame Carlat answered, awaking suddenly to the situation. 'Through my closet! Once in the yard they may pass out through the stables.'

'Which way?' Tignonville asked impatiently. 'Don't stand looking at me, but——'

'Through this door!' Madame Carlat answered, hurrying to it.

He was following when the Countess stepped forward and interposed between him and the door. 'Stay!' she cried; and there was not one who did not notice a new decision in her voice, a new dignity in her bearing. 'Stay, monsieur, we may be going too fast. To go out now and in that guise—may it not be to incur greater peril than you incur here? I believe that you are in no danger of your life at present. Therefore, why——'

'In no danger, madame!' he cried, interrupting her in astonishment. 'Have you seen the gibbet in the Square? Do you call that no danger?'

'It is not erected for you.'

'No?'

'No, monsieur, I swear it is not. And I know of reasons, urgent reasons, why you should not go. M. de Tavannes'—she continued, naming him nervously, as conscious of the weak spot—'before he rode abroad laid strict orders on all to keep within, since the smallest matter might kindle the city. Therefore, M. de Tignonville, I request, nay I entreat,' she continued with

greater urgency, as she saw his gesture of denial, 'you to stay here until he returns.'

'And you, madame, will answer for my life?'

She faltered. For a moment, a moment only, her colour ebbed. What if she deceived herself? What if she surrendered her old lover to death? What if—but the doubt was of a moment only. Her duty was plain. 'I will answer for it,' she said, with pale lips, 'if you remain here. And I beg, I implore you—by the love you once had for me, M. Tignonville,' she added desperately, seeing that he was about to refuse, 'to remain here.'

'Once! By the love I once had!' he retorted, lashing himself into ignoble rage. 'Say, rather, the love I have, madame—for I am no woman-weathercock to wed the winner, and hold or not hold, stay or go, as he commands! You, it seems,' he continued with a sneer, 'have learned the wife's lesson well! You would practise on me now, as you practised on me the other night when you stood between him and me! I yielded then, I spared him. And what did I get by it? Bonds and a prison! And what shall I get now? The same! No, madame,' he continued bitterly, addressing himself as much to the Carlats and the others as to his old mistress. 'I do not change! I loved! I love! I was going and I go! If death lay beyond that door'—and he pointed to it—'and life at his will were certain here, I would pass the threshold rather than take my life of him!' And, dragging La Tribe with him, with a passionate gesture he rushed by her, opened the door, and disappeared in the next room.

The Countess took one pace forward, as if she would have followed him, as if she would have tried farther persuasion. But as she moved a cry rooted her to the spot. A rush of feet and the babel of many voices filled the passage with a tide of sound, which drew nearer. The escape was known! Would the fugitives have time to slip out below?

Someone knocked at the door, tried it, pushed and beat on it. But the Countess and all in the room had run to the windows and were looking out.

If the two had not yet made their escape they must be taken. But no; as the Countess leaned from the window, first one dusty figure and then a second darted from a door below, and made for the nearest turning out of the Place Ste.-Croix. Before they gained it, four men, of whom Badelon, his grey locks

flying, was first, dashed out in pursuit, and the street rang with cries of 'Stop him! Seize him! Seize him!' Someone—one of the pursuers or another—let off a musket to add to the alarm, and in a moment, as if the report had been a signal, the Place was in a hubbub, people flocked into it with mysterious quickness, and from a neighbouring roof—whence, precisely, it was impossible to say—the crackling fire of a dozen arquebuses alarmed the city far and wide.

Unfortunately, the two fugitives had been baulked at the first turning. Making for a second, they found it choked, and, swerving, darted across the Place towards St.-Maurice, seeking to lose themselves in the gathering crowd. But the pursuers clung desperately to their skirts, overturning here a man and there a child; and then in a twinkling, Tignonville, as he ran round a booth, tripped over a peg and fell, and La Tribe stumbled over him and fell also. The four riders flung themselves fiercely on their prey, secured them, and began to drag them with oaths and curses towards the door of the inn.

The Countess had seen all from her window; had held her breath while they ran, had drawn it sharply when they fell. Now 'They have them!' she muttered, a sob choking her, 'They have them!' And she clasped her hands. If he had followed her advice! If he had only followed her advice!

But that they were taken proved less certain than she deemed it. The crowd, which grew each moment, knew nothing of pursuers or pursued. On the contrary, a cry went up that the riders were Huguenots, and that the Huguenots were rising and slaying the Catholics; and as no story was too improbable for those days, and this was one constantly set about, first one stone flew, and then another, and another. A man with a staff darted forward and struck Badelon on the shoulder, two or three others pressed in and jostled the riders; and if three more of Tavannes' following had not run out on the instant and faced the mob with their pikes, and for a moment forced them to give back, the prisoners would have been rescued at the very door of the inn. As it was they were dragged in, and the gates were flung to and barred in the nick of time. Another moment, almost another second, and the mob had seized them. As it was, a hail of stones poured on the front of the inn, and amid the rising yells of the rabble there floated heavy and slow over the city the tolling of the great bell of St. Maurice.

CHAPTER XXX.

SACRILEGE!

THE Lieutenant-Governor almost rose from his seat in his astonishment. 'What! No letters?' he cried, a hand on either arm of his chair.

The Magistrates stared. 'No letters?' they muttered.

And 'No letters?' the Provost chimed in more faintly.

Count Hannibal looked smiling round the Council table. He alone was unmoved. 'No,' he said. 'I bear none.'

M. de Montsoreau, who, travel-stained and in his corselet, had the second place of honour at the foot of the table, frowned. 'But—but, M. le Comte,' he said, 'my instructions from Monsieur were to proceed to carry out his Majesty's will in co-operation with you, who, I understood, would bring letters *de par le Roi*.'

'I had letters,' Count Hannibal answered, negligently. 'But on the way I mislaid them.'

'Mislaid them?' Montsoreau cried, unable to believe his ears; while the smaller dignitaries of the city, the magistrates and churchmen, who sat on either side of the table, gaped open-mouthed. It was incredible! It was unbelievable! Mislaid the King's letters! Who had ever heard of such a thing?

'Yes, I mislaid them. Lost them, if you like it better.'

'But you jest!' the Lieutenant-Governor retorted, moving uneasily in his chair. He was a man more highly named for address than courage; and, like most men skilled in finesse, he was prone to suspect a trap. 'You jest, surely, monsieur! Men do not lose his Majesty's letters, by the way.'

'When they contain his Majesty's will, no,' Tavannes answered, with a peculiar smile.

'You imply, then?'

Count Hannibal shrugged his shoulders but had not answered when Bigot entered and handed him his sweetmeat box; he paused to open it and select a prune. He was long in selecting; but no change of countenance led any of those at the table to suspect that inside the lid of the box was a message—a scrap of paper informing him that Montsoreau had left fifty spears in the suburb without the Saumur gate, besides those whom he had brought openly into the town. Tavannes read the note slowly while he

seemed to be choosing his fruit. And then, 'Imply?' he answered. 'I imply nothing, M. de Montsoreau.'

'But——'

'But that sometimes his Majesty finds it prudent to give orders which he does not mean to be carried out. There are things which start up before the eye,' Tavannes continued, negligently tapping the box on the table, 'and there are things which do not; sometimes the latter are the more important. You, better than I, M. de Montsoreau, know that the King in the Gallery at the Louvre is one, and in his closet is another.'

'Yes.'

'And that being so——'

'You do not mean to carry the letters into effect?'

'Had I the letters, certainly, my friend. I should be bound by them. But I took good care to lose them,' Tavannes added naïvely. 'I am no fool.'

'Umph!'

'However,' Count Hannibal continued, with an airy gesture, 'that is my affair. If you, M. de Montsoreau, feel inclined, in spite of the absence of my letters, to carry yours into effect, by all means do so—after midnight of to-day.'

M. de Montsoreau breathed hard. 'And why,' he asked, half sulkily and half ponderously, 'after midnight only, M. le Comte?'

'Merely that I may be clear of all suspicion of having lot or part in it,' Count Hannibal answered pleasantly. 'After midnight of to-night by all means, do as you please. Until midnight, by your leave, we will be quiet.'

The Lieutenant-Governor moved doubtfully in his chair, the fear—which Tavannes had shrewdly instilled into his mind—that he might be disowned if he carried out his instructions, struggling with his avarice and his self-importance. He was rather crafty than bold; and such things had been, he knew. Little by little, and while he sat gloomily debating, the notion of dealing with one or two and holding the body of the Huguenots to ransom—a notion which, in spite of everything, was to bear good fruit for Angers—began to form in his mind. The plan suited him: it left him free to face either way, and it would fill his pockets more genteelly than would open robbery. On the other hand, he would offend his brother and the fanatical party, with whom he commonly acted. They were looking to see him

assert himself. They were looking to hear him declare himself. And——

Harshly Count Hannibal's voice broke in on his thoughts, a something sinister in its tone. 'Where is your brother?' he said. And it was evident that he had not noted his absence until then. 'My lord's Vicar of all people should be here!' he continued, leaning forward and looking round the table. His brow was stormy.

Lescot squirmed under his eye, Thuriot turned pale and trembled. It was one of the canons of St.-Maurice who at length took on himself to answer. 'His Reverence begged, M. le Comte,' he ventured, 'that you would excuse him. His duties——'

'Is he ill?'

'He——'

'Is he ill, sirrah?' Tavannes roared. And while all bowed before the lightning of his eye, no man at the table knew what had roused the sudden tempest. But Bigot knew, who stood by the door, and whose ear, keen as his master's, had caught the distant report of a musket shot. 'If he be not ill,' Tavannes continued, rising and looking round the table in search of signs of guilt, 'and there be foul play here, and he the player, the Bishop's own hand shall not save him! By heaven it shall not! Nor yours!' he continued, looking fiercely at Montsoreau. 'Nor your master's!'

The Lieutenant-Governor sprang to his feet. 'M. le Comte,' he stammered, 'I do not understand this language! Nor this heat, which may be real or not! All I say is, if there be foul play here——'

'If!' Tavannes retorted. 'At least, if there be, there be gibbets too!' 'And I see necks!' he added, leaning forward. 'Necks!' And then, with a look of flame, 'Let no man leave this table until I return,' he cried, 'or he will have to deal with me. Nay,' he continued, changing his tone abruptly, as the prudence which never entirely left him—and perhaps the remembrance of the other's fifty spearmen—sobered him in the midst of his rage, 'I am hasty. I mean not you, M. de Montsoreau! Ride where you will, ride with me if you will—and I will thank you. Only remember, until midnight Angers is mine!'

And, still speaking, he moved from the table, and, leaving all staring after him, strode down the room. An instant he paused

on the threshold and looked back; then he passed out, and clattered down the stone stairs. His horse and riders were waiting, but, his foot in the stirrup, he stayed for a word with Bigot. 'Is it so?' he growled.

The Norman did not speak, but pointed towards the Place Ste.-Croix, whence an occasional shot made answer for him.

In those days the streets of the Black City were narrow and crooked, overhung by timber houses and hampered by booths; nor could Tavannes from the old Town Hall—now abandoned—see the Place Ste.-Croix. But that he would soon cure. He struck spurs to his horse, and, followed by his ten horsemen, he clattered noisily down the paved street. A dozen groups hurrying the same way sprang panic-stricken to the walls, or saved themselves in doorways. He was up with them, he was beyond them! Another hundred yards, and he would see the Place.

And then, with a cry of rage, he drew rein a little, discovering what was before him. In the narrow gut of the way a great black banner, borne on two poles, was lurching towards him. It was moving in the van of a dark procession of priests, who, with their attendants and a crowd of devout, filled the street from wall to wall. They were chanting one of the penitential psalms, but not so loudly as to drown the uproar in the Place beyond them.

They made no way, and Count Hannibal swore furiously, suspecting treachery. But he was no madman, and at this moment the least reflection would have sent him about to seek another road. Unfortunately, as he hesitated a man sprang with a gesture of warning to his horse's head and seized it; and Tavannes, mistaking the motive of the act, lost his self-control. He struck the fellow down, and with a reckless word rode headlong into the procession, shouting to the black robes to make way, make way! A cry, nay, a very shriek of horror, answered him and rent the air. And in a minute the thing was done. Too late, as the Bishop's Vicar, struck by his horse, fell screaming under its hoofs—too late, as the consecrated vessels which he had been bearing rolled in the mud, Tavannes saw that they bore the canopy and the Host!

He knew what he had done, then. Before his horse's iron shoes struck the ground again, his face—even his face—had lost its colour. But to hesitate now, to pause now, was to be torn in pieces; for his riders, seeing that which the banner had veiled from him, had not followed him, and he was alone, in the middle

of brandished fists and weapons. He hesitated not a moment. Drawing a pistol he spurred onwards, his horse plunging wildly among the shrieking priests; and though a hundred hands, hands of acolytes, hands of shaven monks, clutched at his bridle or gripped his boot, he got clear of them. Clear, carrying with him the memory of one face seen an instant amid the crowd, one face seen, to be ever remembered—the face of Father Pezelay, white, evil, scarred, distorted by wicked triumph.

Behind him, the thunder of ‘Sacrilege! Sacrilege!’ rose to heaven, and men were gathering. In front the crowd which skirmished about the inn was less dense, and, ignorant of the thing that had happened in the narrow street, made ready way for him, the boldest recoiling before the look on his face. Some who stood nearest to the inn, and had begun to hurl stones at the window and to beat on the doors—which had only the minute before closed on Badelon and his prisoners—supposed that he had his riders behind him; and these fled apace. But he knew better even than they the value of time; he pushed his horse up to the gates, and hammered them with his boot while he kept his pistol-hand towards the Place and the cathedral, watching for the transformation which he knew would come!

And come it did; on a sudden, in a twinkling! A white-faced monk, frenzy in his eyes, appeared in the midst of the crowd. He stood and tore his garments before the people, and, stooping, threw dust on his head. A second and a third followed his example; then from a thousand throats the cry of ‘Sacrilege! Sacrilege!’ rolled up, while clerks flew wildly hither and thither shrieking the tale, and priests denied the Sacraments to Angers until it should purge itself of the evil thing.

By that time Count Hannibal had saved himself behind the great gates, by the skin of his teeth. The gates had opened to him in time. But none knew better than he that Angers had no gates thick enough, nor walls of a height, to save him from the storm he had unwarily let loose!

(To be continued.)

